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**INCREDIBLE
COMPOSITES**

Everything you need to know, from
choosing photos to final colour grading

JOHN ROSS'
EXPERT GUIDE TO

NATURAL RETOUCHING

• Enhance skin texture • Create glossy hair • Subtle colour boosts

BEFORE



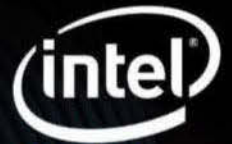
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HOW I MADE:
FINDING THAT PLACE

How Daniel Bogni used digital painting techniques to create this peaceful scene

IN THIS ISSUE...

APRIL MADDEN
Editor

COVER IMAGE

JOHN ROSS
theartofretouching.com

Beauty retouching can sometimes look too perfect, but expert John Ross is a master of the natural look. Join him on p26 to discover the secrets of successful retouching; what to leave in and what to clone out.



The problem with retouching is that it can often go too far. We've all seen the terrifying examples of plastic-smooth skin, Liquify-ed limbs and eyes that just aren't where they should be. Equally, there's an ongoing dialogue about the potential pitfalls of retouching: the idea of 'truth' in photography and whether unattainably perfect images have a negative effect on some viewers. If only there were some middle ground, where images were retouched to enhance their natural beauty without swamping it with either badly-smudged smoothing or overt perfection...

It turns out that there is, and retouching pro John Ross is an expert on it. Turn to p26 to find out how he brings out the natural beauty in an image, and how you can too. You'll also find details of a course he's running in New York State in October 2015, where you can learn some masterful tricks from the man himself.

Elsewhere in the issue we take a look at another controversial artform: photobashing (p40). There's a big debate as to whether photobashing is 'art' or not (a debate that we in the Photoshop community have been used to addressing in our artwork since we first picked up a stylus), but our collection of professional tips from industry experts is proof of both its stunning aesthetic qualities and the level of technical know-how it requires to pull off a perfectly photobashed piece.

We also take an in-depth look at compositing with expert Alex Lanier. Follow his ten-page guide on p52 and discover the secrets of combining photos like a pro and learn how to create incredible composites (and some handy cheats to cover the cracks while you're still perfecting your style!).

Plus we have a packed selection of tutorials for you, an in-depth review of the Cintiq 27QHD and much more Photoshop goodness.

Enjoy the issue!

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COMPOSITING



WARP & SELECTIONS



DISPLACEMENT MAPS

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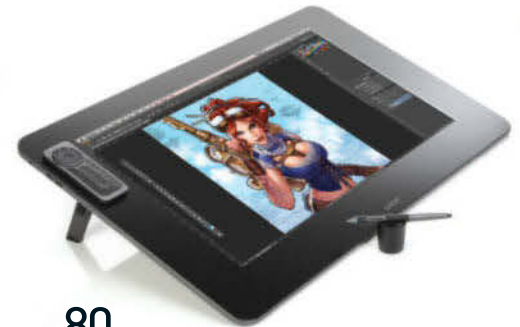
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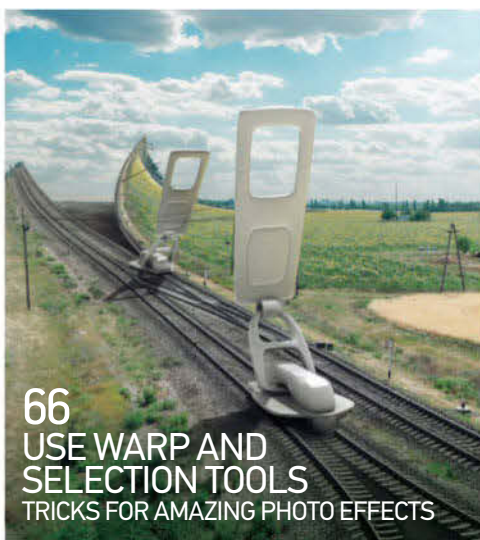
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ADVANCED PHOTOSHOP® PRO PANEL

MEET THE PROFESSIONALS SHARING THEIR PHOTOSHOP
EXPERTISE AND TECHNIQUES IN THIS ISSUE



ALEX LANIER

www.laniercreations.com

Digitally painting your 2D characters into a 3D base environment can have great results when done correctly. When you export your 3D environment into Photoshop, you now need to paint your 2D characters into the scene. You first need to add your perspective guidelines so your characters match the background. These perspective guidelines will help you pose your characters correctly especially when dealing with dynamic and awkward camera angles.

■ **Get more pro compositing advice from Alex Lanier in his complete guide on p52**



© Alex Lanier

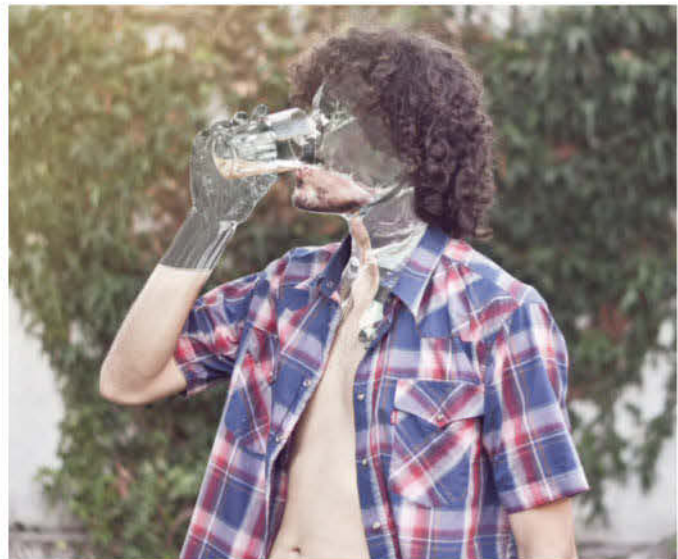


MARTIN DE PASQUALE

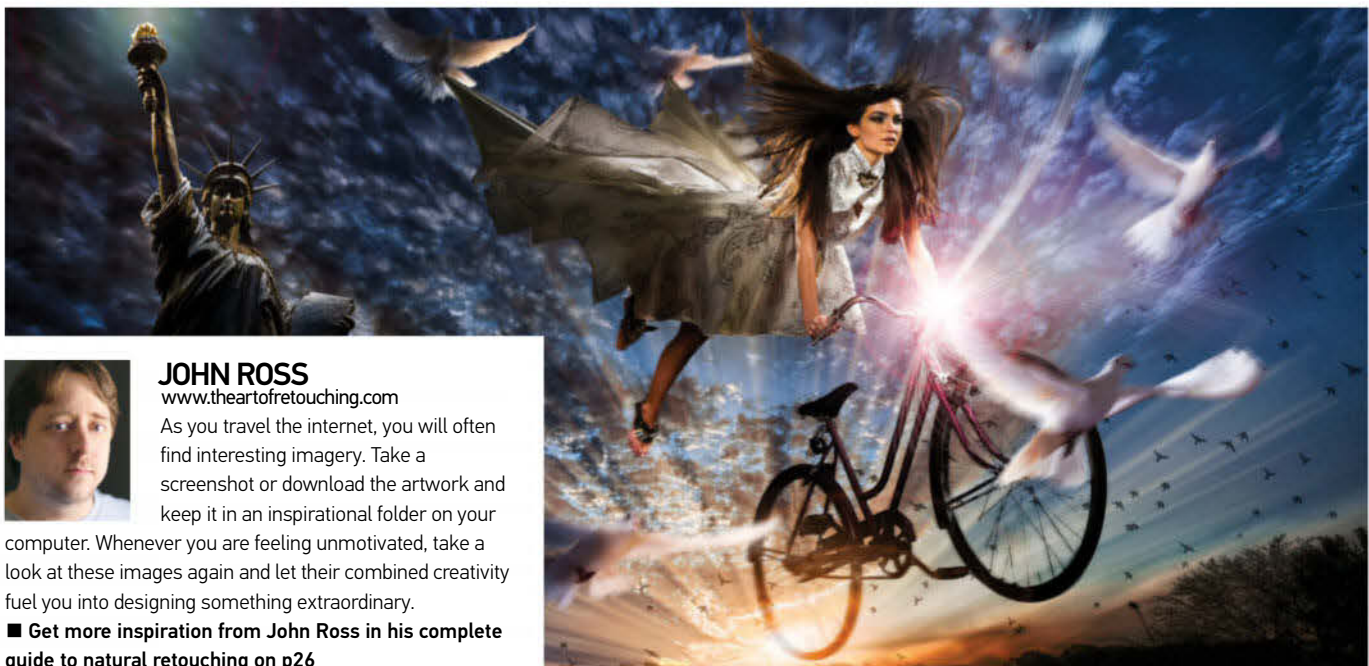
www.martindepasquale.com

Look around you, and see how things look and react in reality; the glass reflection on a surface, how it casts a shadow on a particular area or with a specific light. Observe everything, take photographs, annotate them, and use these as a resource for your work.

■ **Discover more about how Martin De Pasquale creates amazing photo effects in his tutorial on p66**



© Martin De Pasquale



JOHN ROSS

www.theartofretouching.com

As you travel the internet, you will often find interesting imagery. Take a screenshot or download the artwork and keep it in an inspirational folder on your computer. Whenever you are feeling unmotivated, take a look at these images again and let their combined creativity fuel you into designing something extraordinary.

■ **Get more inspiration from John Ross in his complete guide to natural retouching on p26**

© John Ross

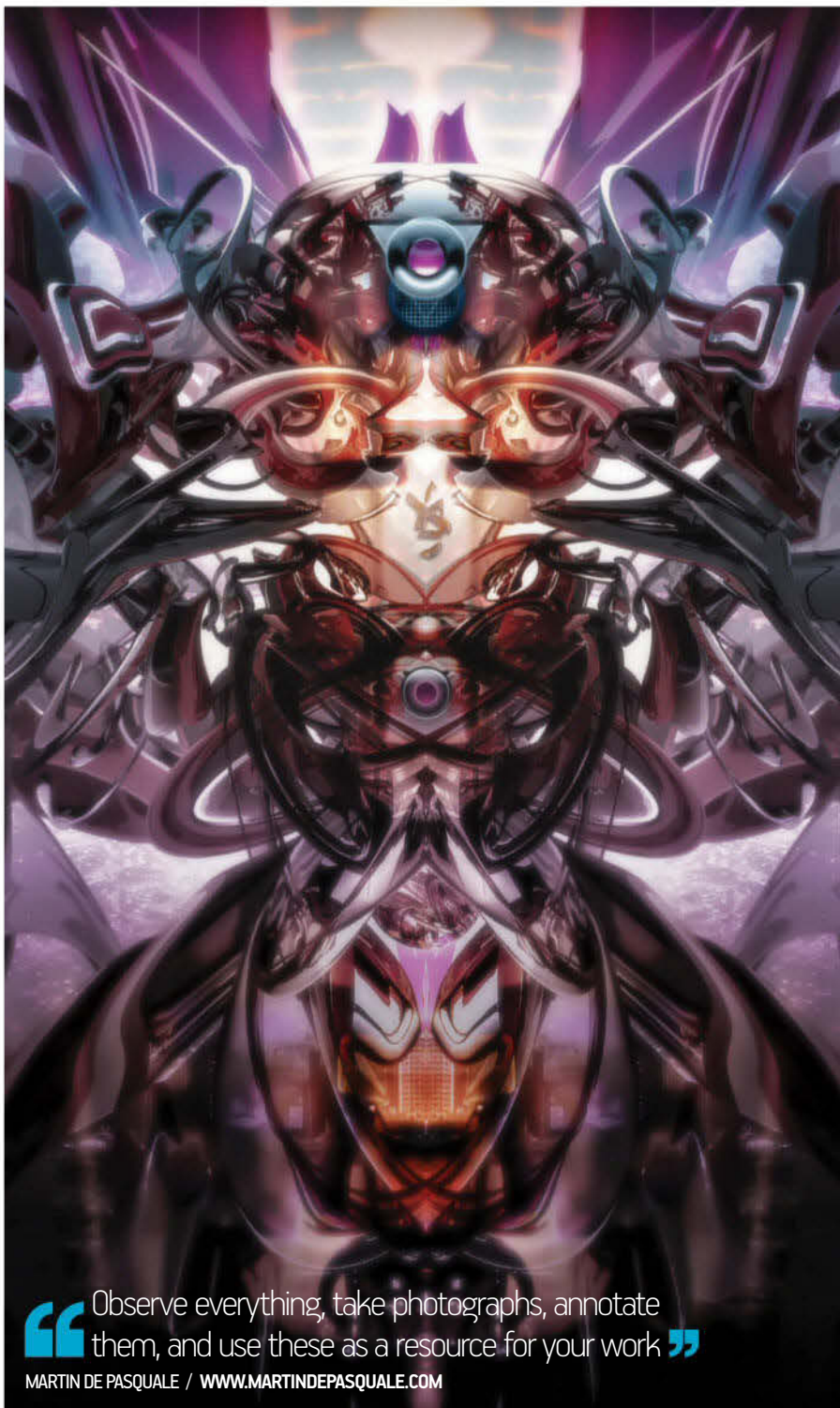


ANDRE VILLANUEVA
www.000-000-0000.com

Camera Raw makes a great finisher to a piece. Merge layers at the top of the layer stack (Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Option+Shift+E) then convert to a Smart Object (right-click, choose Convert to Smart Object). Go to Filter>Camera Raw Filter. Have fun with the myriad settings. Click OK when done. Since you applied it as

a Smart Filter, you can refine at any time.

■ Get more expert techniques from Andre Villanueva in his tutorial on p72



“Observe everything, take photographs, annotate them, and use these as a resource for your work”

MARTIN DE PASQUALE / WWW.MARTINDEPASQUALE.COM

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TOM ANDERS-WATKINS ON HIS ADOBE COMMISSION

ADOBE HAS SELECTED 25 AMAZING UP-AND-COMING ARTISTS TO CELEBRATE PHOTOSHOP'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY. WE CAUGHT UP WITH THE UK NOMINEE

Earlier this year Adobe – to celebrate reaching its milestone 25th birthday – launched its campaign to find 25 artists under 25 that were the most creative visual artists in their age group, representing the most innovative, forward-looking work out there and showing the world what the next generation of Photoshop artists is made of via a commission from Adobe.



With some of the global 25 under 25 chosen, we caught up with the UK winner Tom Anders-Watkins, to find out about his commission, his goals and where he sees himself in ten years time. Tom Anders-Watkins is a 20-year-old student studying Creative Advertising at the University of Lincoln. An aspiring art director and self-taught designer, he has produced a vast portfolio of creative pieces. Check them out at www.behance.net/tomanders and visit www.adobe.com to check out the rest of the 25 Under 25.

WHAT WAS THE COMMISSION ASKING YOU TO DO?

The brief was quite simple; create a work of art, in your own style, that celebrates Photoshop's 25th birthday. The only mandatory [part of the brief] was that it had to contain the number 25 somewhere, and work well for showcasing on Instagram.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO CREATE THE FINAL IMAGE?

My inspiration was Photoshop – which is in essence the beating heart of digital art and design. I wanted to create something relatively abstract and mesmerising that beat to a rhythm. So I made a looping animation in my abstract style. I drew on a combination of retro and futuristic themes, to celebrate Photoshop's heritage as well as its future. It's also full of movement, geometry and vivid gradient colour, very typical of my style. I'm still working out my style, but I like gradients, so they feature heavily.

WHAT ROLE DOES PHOTOSHOP PLAY IN YOUR IMAGE CREATION?

For me, Photoshop is the king of design programs, it's a powerhouse that can handle almost anything nowadays. Along with Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop plays a key role in all my artwork – I still use other



The final image that Watkins created for the campaign: "Fast forward seven years, and I'm a self-taught designer with a passionate interest in just about every creative discipline"

programs to do all my construction work, but Photoshop brings it all together.

WHAT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES DID YOU USE?

Technique wise, a lot of the circles and gradients (my favourite combination) were used. Although my favourite tool has to be the blending options, because they allow you to create unique looks and completely alter the colour scheme of your elements in a second. I used a lot of overlay in this particular piece to create a futuristic feel.

WHAT ARE YOUR NEXT STEPS? WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 10 YEARS?

After finishing my studies, I hope to break into the advertising industry and become an art or creative director. I'd like to one day set up my own studio or agency too.

“I drew on a combination of retro and futuristic themes, to celebrate Photoshop's heritage as well as its future **”**

Tom Anders-Watkins

OTHER GLOBALLY FEATURED ARTISTS:



FLORA BORSI, 21, HUNGARY
Hungarian fine-art photographer Flora Borsi is currently studying at Moholy-

Nagy University and is best known in the Adobe Community as the woman behind the Photoshop CC 2014 Splash Screen.



ZEV HOOVER, 16, USA

If you were to stumble across Zev Hoover's work online, you may be forgiven for

thinking, due to its quality and spectacularly polished nature, that Hoover is well beyond his years. However, when Hoover started using Photoshop he was just eight years old and is now one of the most recognised and featured young artists under 25.

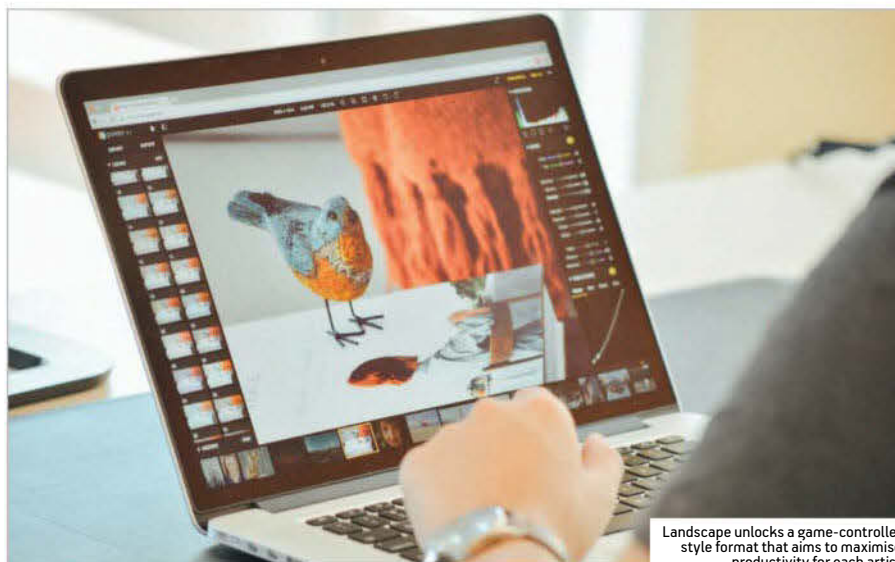
POLARR TAKES ON PHOTOSHOP MIX WITH NEW APP

POLARR IS MAKING WAVES AND CONQUERING THE APP STORE WITH ITS NEW FREE PHOTO EDITING APP FOR IOS

Polarr, known for its browser-based photo editing app online, has recently launched an image editor for iOS that competes with some of the best pro-level image editors on the iOS platform – while maintaining its ease of use.

The editing platform originally began (somewhat unconventionally) as a completely free, advanced online editor that after picking up pace with followers in their droves later evolved into the Polarr iOS app, which also makes many pro editing features previously found in expensive and complicated software easy to use and available for free.

Contrary to popular belief the team at Polarr has always claimed that they are not a Photoshop competitor. "We don't offer layers/masks or vector creation." However, Polarr still offers all the essential tools for advanced light and colour controls.



Landscape unlocks a game-controller style format that aims to maximise productivity for each artist

Key features include creating and saving your own style presets, infinite undo/redo checks and a history button to return to any point in your history. Image editing includes the options to add radial and graduated filters, HSL channels and Tone Curves to help you perfect the colours in your image. This is all alongside the usual filters, adjustments, highlights and distortions

that you would usually expect to find in a photo-editing app.

The mobile app is currently out on iOS for free, with an in-app purchase of £3.99 for a few pro features (local adjustments, saving presets), and with talks of an Android version being launched at the end of Summer 2015, there isn't long to wait – so be sure to add it to your wish list!

INCREDIBLE INSPIRATION FROM WEAPONS OF MASS CREATION

GO MEDIA HOSTED ANOTHER YEAR OF THE PREMIERE ART AND CREATIVE DESIGN CONFERENCE IN THE US

Weapons of Mass Creation Fest, created by Go Media, returned for its sixth year this August. For three days, senior creatives, entrepreneurs, artists, students, and fans gathered in Cleveland, USA to learn, be inspired, collaborate, network and celebrate their passion for art and design.

"Weapons of Mass Creation is a young grassroots movement to inspire and enable the creative mind. We believe that good things happen when ideas and talents are shared within the community. This mentality manifests itself in the lifestyle of a Weapon of Mass Creation: a person who defies the hand they're dealt and makes stuff happen."

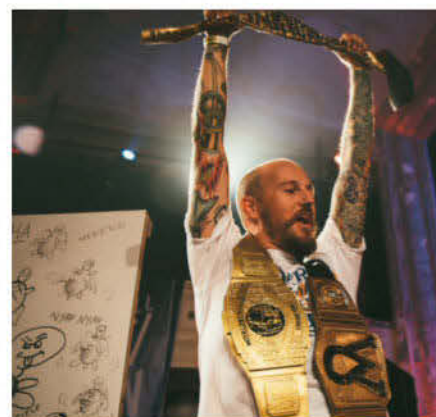
The event was packed with intoxicating design, talks by design pros like Michael Bierut, incredible amounts of inspiration, authentic networking and a chance to build a sense of community. Attendees had access to 14 speakers, eight workshops, three panels, and over 20 vendors during the three-day event. Alumni include Tad Carpenter, Aaron Draplin, Brandon Rike, Chuck Anderson, Dan

A selection of last year's event images



Christofferson, Johnny Cupcakes, Mark Brickey and the Adventures in Design Podcast and National Poster Retrospecticus.

Fast becoming an essential event in the creative calendar, WMC still retains its small-town feel despite building on its heritage and popularity with every year. For more information about next year's event, visit www.wmcfest.com.





www.chrislabrooy.com
@ChrisLabrooy

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD

UTILISING VARIOUS SKILLS, CHRIS LABROOY CREATES INTRIGUING 3D IMAGERY THAT TRANSFORMS THE ORDINARY INTO SOMETHING DYNAMIC, REDEFINING SHAPES IN A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

Having the ability to re-imagine the world is a great asset for an artist to have, and Chris Labrooy has truly mastered this skill. Whether it's twisting the bodies of cars or turning normal objects into typography, Chris proves that there are other ways to see the world. His work with textures, shapes and typography will wow the viewer every time. Transforming the known into something special creates a sense of artistic freedom and expression.

YOUR ART IS WONDERFUL AND VERY INSPIRATIONAL. DID YOU HAVE ANY FORMAL TRAINING?

I am self-taught on the technical side... 3D and rendering. Creativity however is unique to every person and your process is not only learned from others, but also through personal experimentation.

WHEN DID YOU DISCOVER YOUR CURRENT STYLE AND HOW HAS IT EVOLVED?

It's not something I was doing at all at a young age or even at art school for that matter. I became interested in 3D when I began using CAD to create vital product ideas as part of the design process. The things you could do with the tools were amazing. It became interesting to see them in creative ways, so I started concentrating on image making.

CREATING TEXT IN UNIQUE AND INTERESTING WAYS SEEMS TO BE A THEME IN YOUR WORK. WHEN DID THIS PASSION DEVELOP?

I started experimenting with 3D typography work in 2008. Initially it was all about rendering typography as large-scale buildings and then it developed to include all sorts of everyday objects. My background is in product design, so it felt natural for me to design letters as if they were products, food or whatever else I could think of. I didn't want to create abstract CGI artwork so I thought letters would be good to try, because they are useful and functional.

WHAT WAS THE CREATIVE PROCESS BEHIND YOUR PROJECT FOR PRINGLES?

We spent about six weeks on that project start to finish. The agency had a good idea of the overall concept and had the different headlines pinned down. For me the creativity was in the details and

craftsmanship. I worked hard to create textures that were both believable and tasty. To this day the Pringles job is one of my favourites and it was really satisfying.

WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION BEHIND AUTO AEROBICS?

Auto Aerobics began in life as a tiny idea for a project about New York. Walking through Brooklyn on a winter evening is truly a memorable

experience and motivated me to build a digital 3D model that captured the various details and textures of the area. The Pontiac automobile was initially destined to be a prop parked on the sidewalk; however, I later decided to make it a parallel subject of the scenes and started to abstract the forms of the cars by hollowing out the vehicle's core, stretching the proportions and experimenting with multiples... Which over time began to look extraordinary.



All images © Chris Labrooy



Nike Sneakerboots London: Make a twist on well known cityscapes; introduce a product or something new to create an image that stands out

Tales Of Auto Elasticity: Chris enjoys using a photo reference before he begins working in 3D. This helps maintain a sense of realism

“The internet is great for getting your work in front of people. You just have to work hard to create your own voice and perspective on things”



Tales Of Auto Elasticity: Taking everyday objects that are familiar to us and looking at them in a different way can allow you to produce breathtaking imagery



Tales Of Auto Elasticity: Chris uses Cinema 4D for all of his modelling and V-Ray for rendering. Everything in his work is created in 3D, thus giving you a greater sense of realism





Pringles campaign: Spending the right amount of time to find the perfect interaction between texture and light is important when creating an image and will produce wonderful artwork



Land Of The Free: Any object can be transformed into text. Open your creative eye and look for ways to change the familiar

“All my previous experiences feed into my digital work. With CGI, anything is possible so to have a good grasp of the real world is helpful”



Avid Brakes: Diligence, hard work and spending the right amount of time on a project can lead to perfect images

La Chance: It is important as artist to develop your own voice and give your own perspective



WHAT IS IT LIKE WORKING FOR BIG CLIENTS, AND DO YOU HAVE A DREAM CLIENT?

It's exciting when a big client like Nike wants to work with you. I was visiting Barcelona when the Sneaker boots project for Nike came in and I literally dropped everything I was doing, took a call with the creative director and began sketching that night. I don't really have a dream client... I am more interested in cool projects!

WHEN AN AGENCY LIKE GREY COMES TO YOU WITH A PROJECT, HOW DO YOU TACKLE THE IDEA?

It all depends on what stage the agency has taken the concept to. Sometimes the agency will want me to explore different visual treatments, although sometimes they will have a good idea of what they want with fairly detailed sketches. The project is then more about execution and craftsmanship of the images.

WHAT PHOTOSHOP TOOL DO YOU FIND TO BE MOST USEFUL WHEN YOU ARE CREATING YOUR ARTWORK?

It's impossible to pin a favourite tool down because I use so many. Photoshop is really about the sum of its parts because it can do lots of simple things really well. I use masks, colour correction tools, blending modes, spot healing, cloning and all of the filters. If I need to do a quick background extension I will use Photoshop. For depth of field effects I will use a combination of masks and the various blur filters. Sometimes all I need is a simple Curves adjustment and it's great for that.

THE TEXTURES YOU USE ON YOUR 3D MODELS ARE WONDERFUL. CAN YOU SHARE TIPS ON HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCH VIVID TEXTURES?

I enjoy photographing and creating my own textures. I will go for walks and photograph any surface that looks interesting. Photoshop is used to process all the photography and make textures that can be tiled. I use the Clone and Spot Healing tools extensively when creating a seamless edge for my tiled textures. For bump maps I will create greyscale versions, then play with the Curves and Levels to get good contrast.

WHAT TYPE OF COMPUTER SYSTEM ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON? HOW HAVE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES CHANGED THE WAY YOU WORK?

I use a Mac Pro with an NEC SpectraView monitor in my studio. For work on the move, I have a Macbook Pro, which is where the big technological advances have been in the last few years. The processing power on a Macbook Pro means that I can work as I would on my desktop without compromise. I have managed to finish projects in Starbucks when I have to. I also use various Wacom Intuos and Cintiq tablets for a speedier workflow.



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DO YOU HAVE ANY BIG PROJECTS THAT YOU WORKING ON THAT YOU CAN SHARE WITH US?

I have a new Auto Aerobics project that I have been working on for the last few months. Should be exciting, but I don't want to share too much at this stage. I like to keep things close to my chest before publishing for maximum impact.

IF YOU HAD THE TIME TO EXPERIMENT WITH ANOTHER TYPE OF ART FORM OR MEDIUM, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY AND WHY?

Throughout my life, I have been fortunate enough to explore other areas, which have been very influential to what I do now. At school, I did an art foundation, which covered painting, sculpture, design, textiles and graphics. I did 3D design for my undergraduate studies, which was all about making stuff and I really enjoyed working in ceramics, glass, wood and metal. I did a Masters in product design and did all sorts of stuff from furniture to lighting. It is actually trickier for me to find something that I haven't done. All my previous experiences feed into my digital work. With CGI, anything is possible so to have a good grasp of the real world is helpful.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL ARTIST IN TODAY'S COMPETITIVE WORLD?

I think it is about trying to do something that is new and surprising. The internet is great for

“My background is in product design, so it felt natural for me to design letters as if they were products, food or whatever else I could think of”

getting your work in front of people. You just have to work hard to create your own voice and perspective on things.

HAVE YOU HAD TO OVERCOME ANY OBSTACLES AS AN ARTIST?

I feel very fortunate to have had a successful career and I don't feel I have had to face any major hardships as an artist. When I was starting out and building a name for myself I didn't make very much money, but I had an absolute blast working on my own projects and trying to make fresh innovative work. I think my only hardship would be younger artists making work in a similar style to mine and sometimes just going the whole mile and ripping off my work.

WHAT ARTISTS HAVE INSPIRED YOU OVER THE YEARS?

I like Ettore Sottsass, Frank Gehry, and the Bouroullec brothers. When I was younger I would follow designers and research everything they ever did. Things are different now and it's more about a particular project or image that attracts me. It is comparable to music downloading today; I just buy the track I enjoy the most and not the entire album.

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE YOUR WORK?

I publish my work on my website, Behance, Instagram and Facebook. Behance has really grown over the years and provided me with a lot of exposure. The curators at Behance do very important work and I would recommend all artists take advantage of it and think hard about how you present your projects. My agent, Debut Art, also helps promote my work directly to clients, which means I have a lot of angles covered regarding promotion.

LABROOY'S TIPS FOR CREATIVE SUCCESS

WORK SMART AND HARD

■ **PUT IN THE HOURS**

For my work, I feel that it is important to work hard on my projects and put in a lot of hours. The more hours I put in, the more chance there is of stumbling across those happy inspirational accidents.

■ **DON'T RUSH YOUR PROJECTS**

Do not be afraid to step away from a personal project for a few weeks or even months. It is good to let a project breathe for a little time before revisiting it. You can always come back to a project any time and then you will have a fresh outlook.

■ **GET A GOOD CHAIR**

If you are at your computer all day then it is important to be comfortable. My Herman Miller chair is one of my best equipment purchases in the studio. It is better to be comfortable, and having a good chair to support your back will keep you healthy.



Sneaker 'Adict': Having fun with the way you can re-envision something can lead to brilliant designs

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FUN AND CREATIVE CHILDREN'S PACKAGING

WE DISCOVER HOW CONCEPT ILLUSTRATOR OSCAR RAMOS APPROACHED THIS QUIRKY COMMISSION FROM MOOSE ENTERPRISE TO DESIGN THEIR TRASH PACK CHILDREN'S TOYS

ABOUT THE ARTIST

OSCAR RAMOS
www.piensapositivo.cl



Ramos started his career early by learning the basics of illustration and graphic design. After working in animation-based roles for many years Ramos then decided to devote 100 per cent of his time to illustration. He has since worked with numerous ad agencies around the world and for clients including Coca-Cola, Mazda, Puma, Opel, and Honda.

NAME OF PROJECT

**TRASH WHEELS
ILLUSTRATIONS
FOR PACKAGING**

Oscar Ramos is a talented concept illustrator revered for his signature and unique style in the animation industry.

It all started early on with an absolute and complete love of drawing. Ramos then quickly excelled in both the animation and illustration genre; "I studied graphic design because I loved to draw as a kid and loved toys. Luckily I found exactly what I was looking for in the design field – the mix of art and functionality."

Over the years this expertise has led Ramos to develop artwork for companies such as Coca-Cola and Honda, however this hasn't been without learning along the way.

"In earlier commissions, I felt insecure about my work, now I realise [that], that feeling helped me not just improve my painting and drawing skills, but also to be a better listener to my clients and art directors."

Ramos' ability to deliver outstanding finished products led to him obtaining this quirky and very creative project from Moose Enterprise. He was asked to create a whole new concept of cars for their Trash Pack children's toys, Trash Wheels.

CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THE BRIEF YOU WERE GIVEN? WHAT VISUAL CUES DID YOUR CLIENT WANT FROM YOU?

I received this great brief directly from Moose's Art Director. They gave me a brief introduction to the brand and a pretty clear idea of the product. I was told that artwork should be colourful and light yet have lots of contrast. They also sent me some references, but actually ended up referencing some of my own portfolio, because they wanted my distinct style – dynamic, exaggerated and defined shapes, very volumetric and highly detailed.

WERE YOU GIVEN FREE REIN OVER THE PROJECT OR WERE YOU GIVEN MORE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS?

At the beginning of the project, they sent me the first concept drawing of the toy, to see how I would interpret the design into a sketch. Once they approved my style, they developed sketches for the rest of the cars based on the first sketch I made. From that point, it was just adapting and improving the sketches, until the final finished design.

HOW DID YOUR IDEAS EVOLVE THROUGH THE PRODUCTION STAGE?

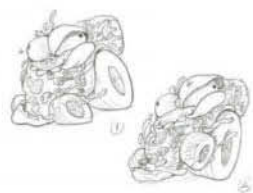
I got pretty clear instructions for every piece and I had to produce many images with the same quality in [a] short time. Then, I developed [a] better understanding of the key requirements for each image: how to create textures, light, and volume in a simpler way whilst producing stronger results... I had to revisit my own processes in order to gain speed without impacting on the quality.

CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOUR MAIN STYLISTIC INSPIRATIONS WERE?

Traditional paintings are very inspiring, probably the classical style. I also take inspiration from illustrators like Norman Rockwell or Leyendecker, but at the same time I like the comic stylings of Mark Ryden and Todd Shorr. More recently, I've been looking to 3D for inspiration, it has brought



Space Dragon illustration



Sketches



Base colours in each layer



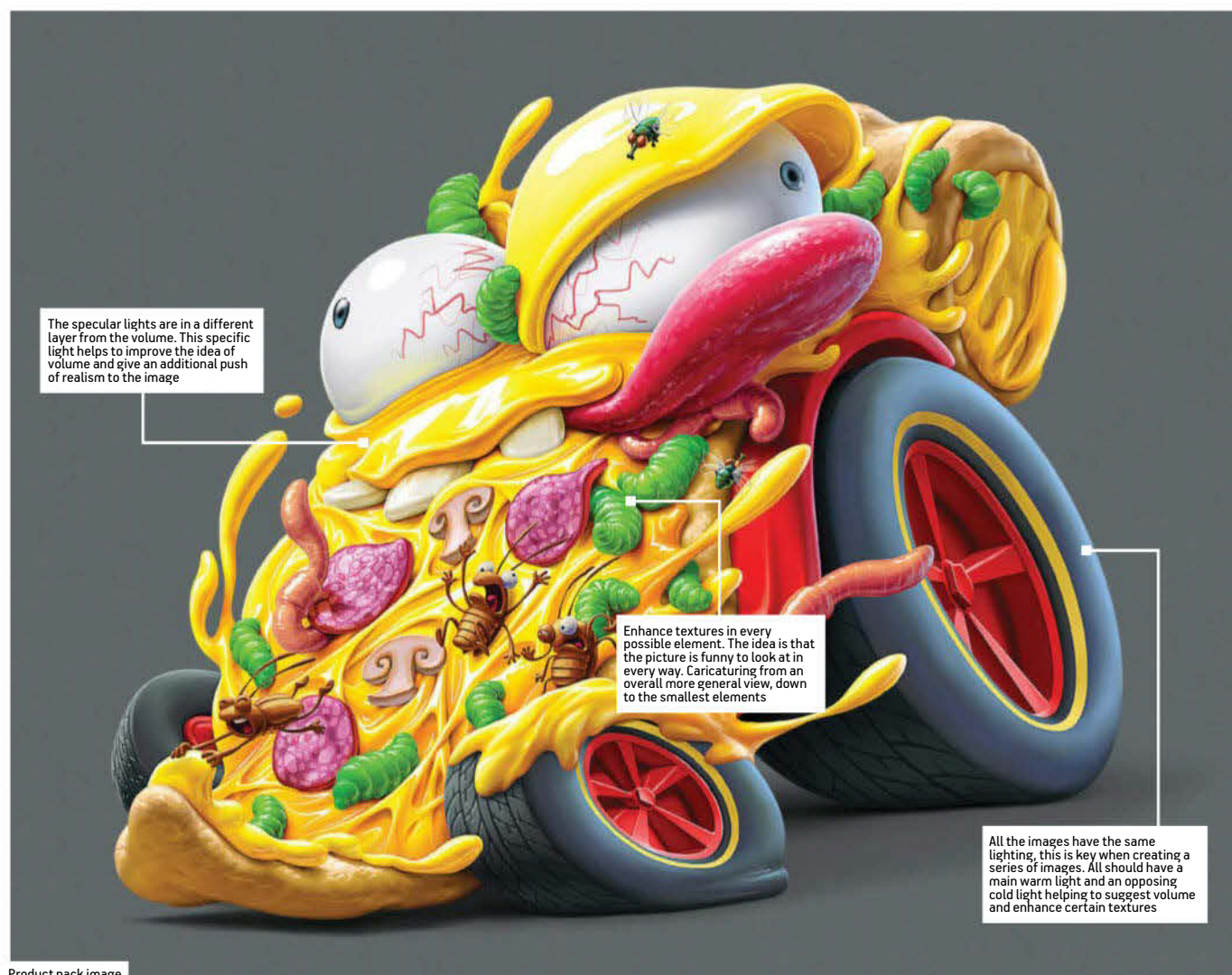
Adjusting colours and rendering volume



Adding textures and refining shapes



Final image



The specular lights are in a different layer from the volume. This specific light helps to improve the idea of volume and give an additional push of realism to the image

Enhance textures in every possible element. The idea is that the picture is funny to look at in every way. Caricaturing from an overall more general view, down to the smallest elements

All the images have the same lighting, this is key when creating a series of images. All should have a main warm light and an opposing cold light helping to suggest volume and enhance certain textures

Product pack image

me a clear insight into the physics of light. The 3D technology adds elements like reflections, opacity and subsurface scattering to the image in order to produce a realistic effect.

WHICH PHOTOSHOP TOOLS DID YOU FIND PARTICULARLY USEFUL WHEN APPLYING YOUR EDITS?

To create my painting style, I use mask selections, Quick Mask mode and layers. I also tend to use blending modes, transparent pixels and clipping masks. Not forgetting the classic Pen tool and its selections feature – these two are very important to my work. Action-set tools

also save me a lot of time. For instance, I have an action preset to colour fill.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT AREA TO FOCUS ON WHEN CREATING AN ILLUSTRATION LIKE THIS?

Definition, definition, definition. All the elements have to be pretty clear and easy to read. No part can be weak. Despite the fact that this particular project was about gross and dirty cars, there was no reason to for the painting to be messy. Even the dirt and worms should be adorable. Every element should be easy to understand, despite being damaged or rotten.

WHAT TIPS OR TRICKS WOULD YOU OFFER TO OTHER ARTISTS LOOKING TO CREATE A SIMILAR EFFECT?

I think everyone has to look for their own way to keep an organised workflow. To get a powerful result, and a rich image with detail, your image should have some kind of order and logical progression. In Photoshop I work with many layers, and try to keep the highest possible definition whilst gaining control over my speed. The main idea is to be able to manage every part, to improve integration or contrast on the whole or whatever is needed to achieve the desired effect of the general composition.

ATOMHAWK

MEET THE PASSIONATE TEAM WHO HELP BRING IDEAS TO LIFE FOR FILMS, VIDEOGAMES AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA, WORKING FOR SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST NOTABLE CLIENTS

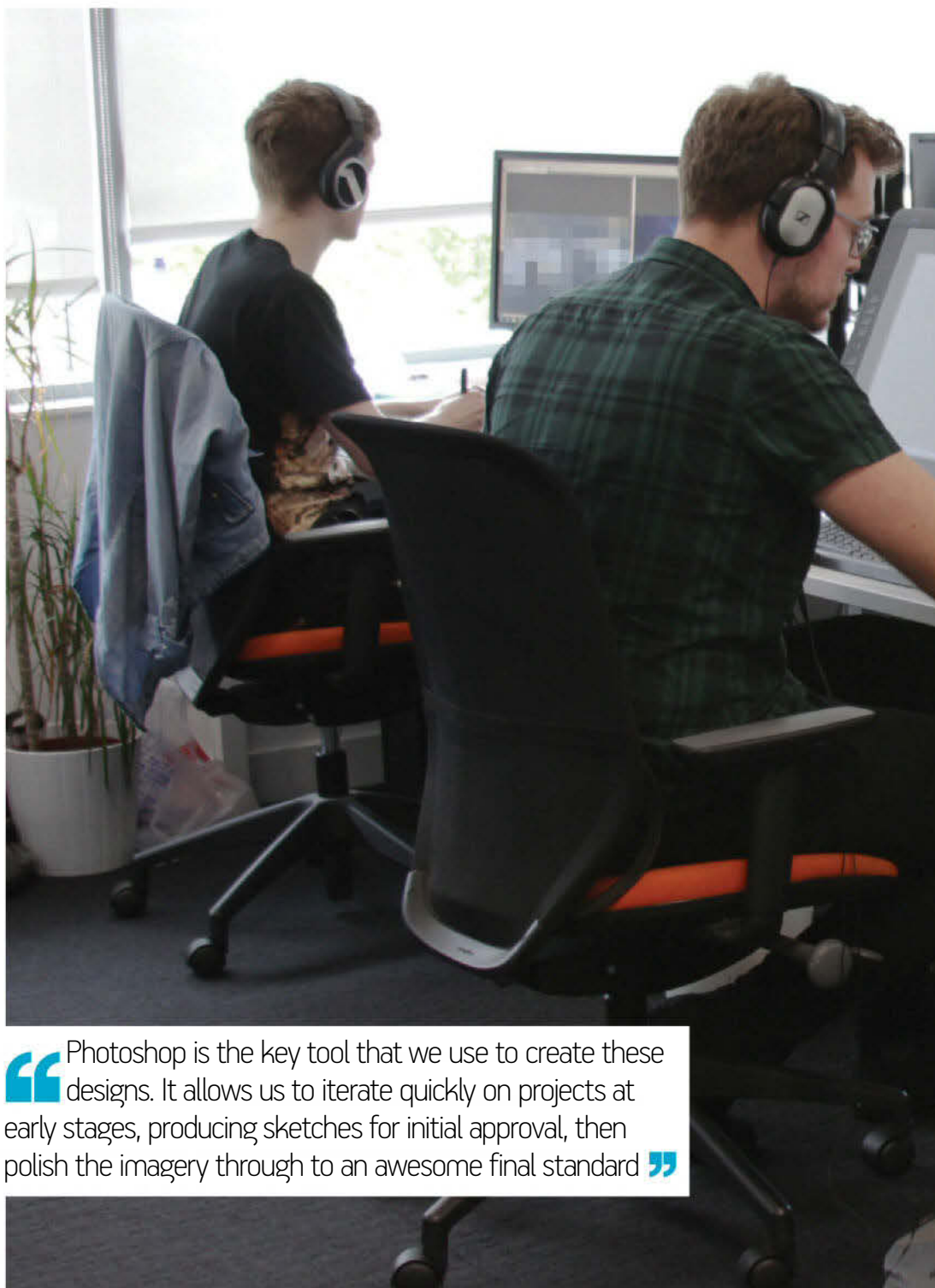
Creating striking, high-end visuals for huge blockbuster films, such as Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy*, and best-selling videogames, like *Mortal Kombat X*, it's hard to believe that Atomhawk studio is just six years young.

It was founded by Ron Ashtiani (creative director and CEO) with his best creative team from Midway Games studio, which closed in the tough economic times of 2009: "We set off on our journey into the creative services sector, armed with just our talent, experience and creative vision." Since then, the team has worked on eight number-one charting videogames, three blockbuster films and won five awards. The team itself has grown from just four to twenty, and it aims to become "the world's leading design agency for games, film and digital media".

The studio is based in Gateshead in the north east of the UK. Being a relatively small team means that there is a strong bond. "We all know each other really well; whether we're hanging out in the games room or having lunch together in the kitchen, we're like a big family," says Dan Gilmore, lead interactive designer. "Atomhawk is a company totally committed to quality and design flair, so it's quite demanding, but there's a great community of talented artists and designers here that all spur each other on to do bigger and better things each day."

As well as the dedicated team, Atomhawk makes the most of the latest technology and software to achieve its visions. The studio's high-end visuals rely heavily on the power of Photoshop, especially for creating concept art for videogames and films, explains head of operations, Tim Wilson. "This could be anything from a set of stylised character concepts through to the design of photorealistic objects and environments. Photoshop is the key tool that we use to create these designs. It allows us to iterate quickly on projects at early stages, producing sketches for initial approval, then polish the imagery through to an awesome final standard. Since we work on such a variety of projects, Photoshop is essential because of how well it integrates with the rest of the Adobe suite. The UI/UX team often work in Illustrator and After Effects; incorporating work from the concept art team that was done in Photoshop is really straightforward."

Photoshop is the key tool of the trade for the team, but it does utilise other packages, including 3D software such as Modo, Autodesk Maya, Z-Brush and Keyshot, which are helpful when creating base character models and block-outs for environments. In terms of hardware, some of the team have found that



“Photoshop is the key tool that we use to create these designs. It allows us to iterate quickly on projects at early stages, producing sketches for initial approval, then polish the imagery through to an awesome final standard”



ABOUT THE STUDIO

ATOMHAWK

www.atomhawk.com

@atomhawk

Atomhawk is an award winning digital art and design studio. It is a leading specialist creative provider of high-end concept art, UI/UX design, 2D and 3D animation, motion graphics and marketing imagery. At just six years old Atomhawk has already been involved in major projects including work with Marvel.



Dan Gilmore
Lead interactive designer



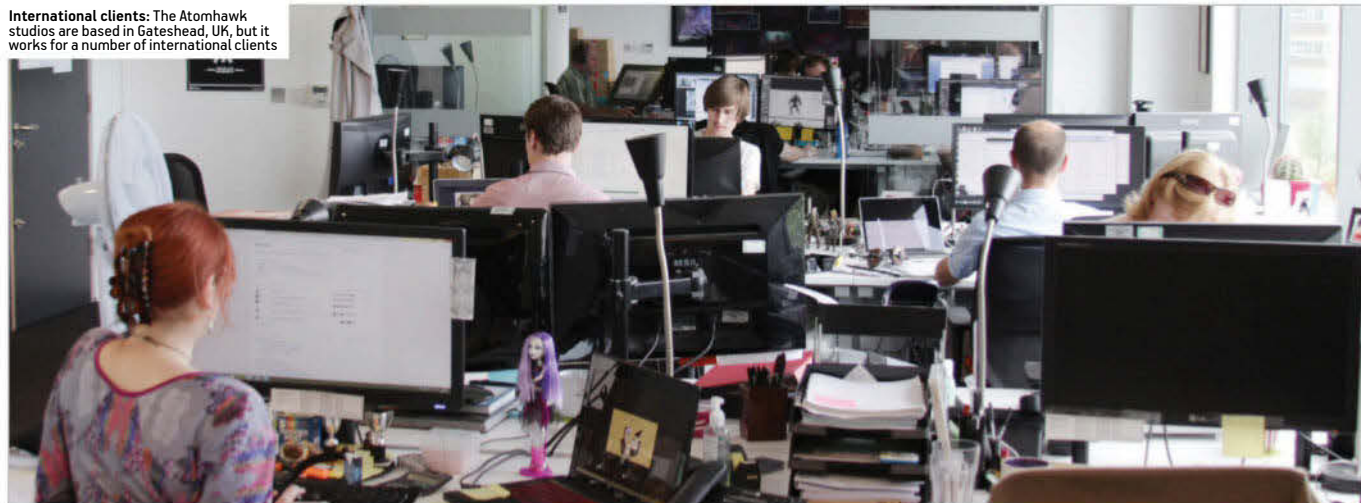
Ron Ashtiani
Creative director and CEO



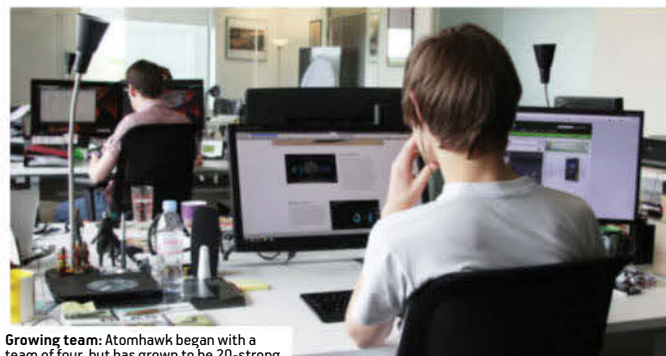
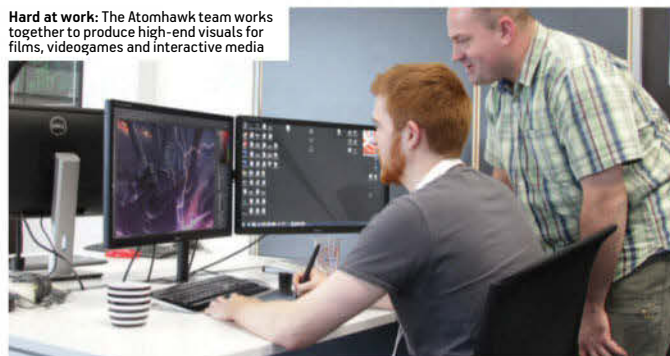
Tim Wilson
Head of operations

Studio space: "We're a relatively small studio, which is nice because we all know each other really well," says Dan Gilmore

International clients: The Atomhawk studios are based in Gateshead, UK, but it works for a number of international clients



Hard at work: The Atomhawk team works together to produce high-end visuals for films, videogames and interactive media



Growing team: Atomhawk began with a team of four, but has grown to be 20-strong

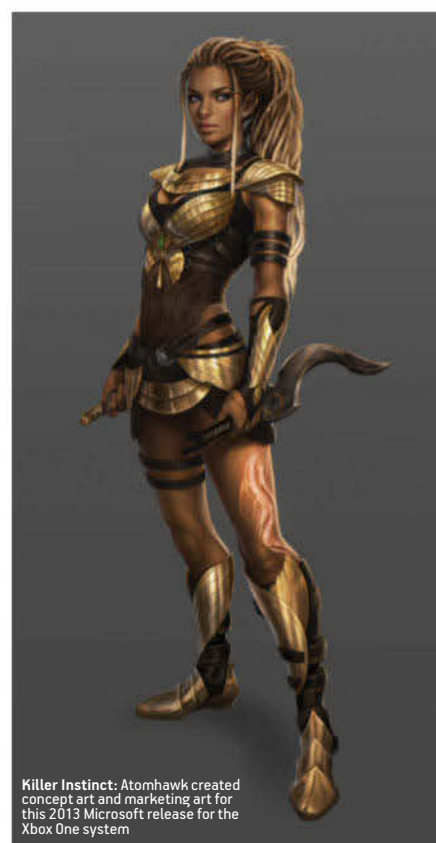
the Wacom Cintiq screen is a real bonus, thanks to its unique, natural interface for drawing and painting.

Other areas of the business also benefit from cutting-edge technology in different ways. "For user interface design, we often have to work with proprietary systems so that our designs fit seamlessly into the final product, which could be anything from a game options screen through to a vending machine menu. Our UI/UX team uses Adobe Illustrator for traditional 2D graphic design work and After Effects to bring their designs to life," explains Wilson. "We've also found that software plays a massive role in successful project management. We've embraced a number of web-based tools, such as Basecamp, to help us track and share projects. This has made a huge positive impact on the way that we communicate as a team, resulting in work being completed faster."

Atomhawk is certainly not lacking the talent or the tools, and its impressive client list, which includes Marvel, Sony and Microsoft, means that the studio can work on the right projects for them. "When possible, we seek out projects where the client is keen for a creative collaboration," says Ashtiani. "This is because as artists and designers, we always like to be involved in the generation of ideas. Plus, with a talented team like ours, we can be a huge creative resource for our clients. However, we do of course love a well-presented brief and the challenge of hitting it in style."

While Atomhawk might be known for producing striking concepts and marketing art for film and videogames, it is also well versed in interactive media design, and the team are no less passionate about their work in this area. "The user interface design we did for Costa Coffee's new flagship coffee machine was a really interesting project," says Ashtiani. "Costa engaged with us due to our games industry background to develop a UI/UX that would be easy to use, entertaining and visually stunning. We also got to work in partnership with fellow design gurus Pininfarina (www.pininfarina.com), who were designing the physical aesthetics of the machine. The audio was being developed by Steve Belgrave of EMIXPRO (www.emixpro.com), who has worked with bands like U2. It was inspirational to be part of a team with such pedigree and to deliver a truly ground-breaking machine that has already won a number of design awards."

As Tim Wilson explains, being skilled in the UI/UX arena could prove very important with the way that the world is developing technologically: "The fact that we have a dedicated user interface team means we provide a service in a very exciting emerging marketplace. As the world becomes ever more digital, user interfaces won't just be restricted to traditional screens. UI will be all around us in areas like packaging, appliances and even clothing, all of which will require great interface design."



Killer Instinct: Atomhawk created concept art and marketing art for this 2013 Microsoft release for the Xbox One system



■ THE JOURNEY BEGINS

DAN GILMORE, LEAD INTERACTIVE DESIGNER, EXPLAINS THE CREATION OF THIS FANTASY-THEMED SCENE



01 | INITIAL SKETCH

Here, the artist has laid down the initial sketch for the scene using just tonal value – the characters are little more than silhouettes at this stage. This is crucial for getting the composition right.



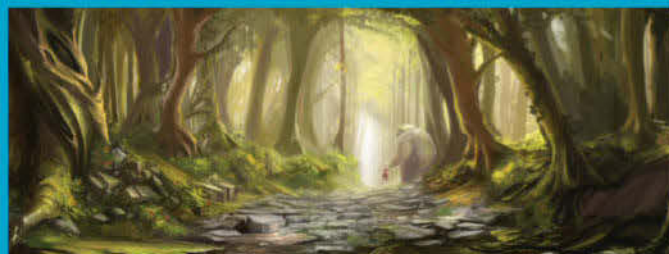
02 | COLOUR PASS

Next, a rough colour pass is done to establish the palette and mood of the piece. You can see how the artist has started to solidify the characters too, using lighting to define their shape more.



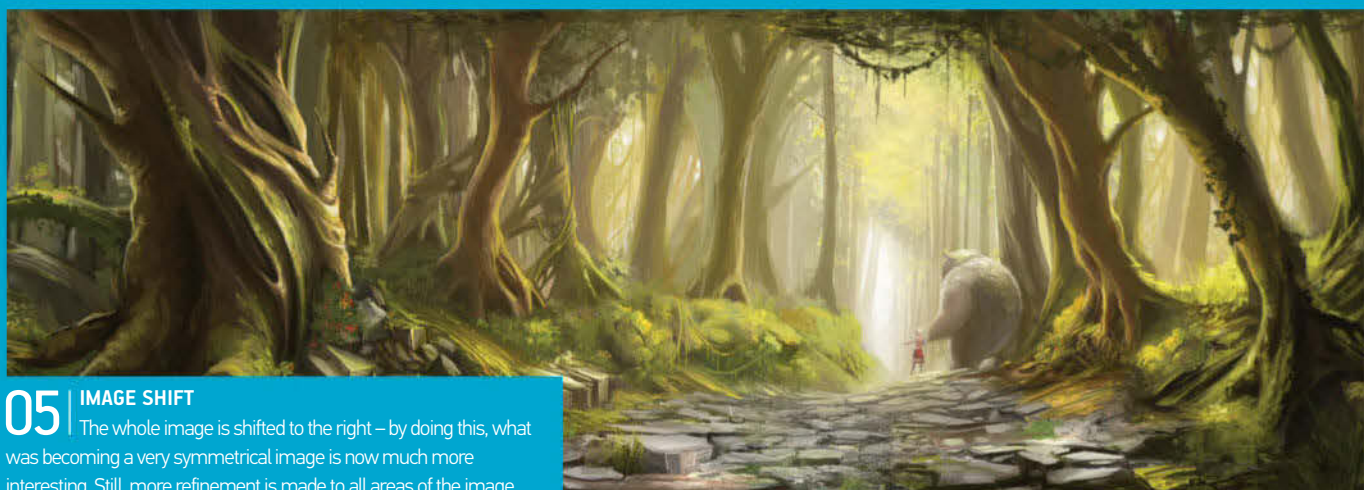
03 | MORE REFINEMENT

The scene is getting more refined now, with foreground details on the floor and trees being added in. You can see how the characters are progressing too – the girl pointing off in to the distance starts to reveal the story for this image.



04 | ADDED DEPTH

To add depth to the forest, the artist has made the trees denser in the background. The artist also uses the trees to frame the characters and reinforce the focal point.



05 | IMAGE SHIFT

The whole image is shifted to the right – by doing this, what was becoming a very symmetrical image is now much more interesting. Still, more refinement is made to all areas of the image.

Recently, Atomhawk also had the opportunity to work on the sequel to the huge 2012 success that was *The Avengers*. “*Avengers: Age of Ultron* for Marvel was a challenging project,” says Ashtiani. “We’d rolled straight off *Guardians of the Galaxy* onto *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, and they were very different beasts. *Guardians of the Galaxy* was a blank canvas due to there being no previous movies and the comics were fairly low profile, so we were creatively very free to reimagine a universe. *The Avengers* was one of the biggest-grossing movies of all time, so there was a lot to live up to and a lot of design work was already done. There was inevitably some pressure in building on that and taking it to the next level – I think we managed it though!”

These projects wouldn’t come together so seamlessly without the strength of a close-knit team behind them, so how do they work together to meet client expectations? “Communication is key,” says Tim Wilson. “We find that clients gain huge amounts of confidence in us when we create a clear dialogue and set of expectations around deliverables and timescales. The production and art

“*The Avengers* was one of the biggest-grossing movies of all time, so there was a lot to live up to. There was inevitably some pressure in building on that and taking it to the next level – I think we managed it though!”



Dead Island: Riptide: Released in 2013, Atomhawk produced the key marketing artwork that adorned magazine covers and shop floors during the game's release

teams work closely with clients at the beginning of a project to set it up on the correct footing. We share progress internally through Basecamp, then with clients on a regular basis at key artwork stages (eg, thumbnail sketches, refined black and white, colour pass, final renders, etc). Within the team we also have a lot of industry experience, which helps a lot, especially if a project changes scope and we need to think fast to keep things on track!”

It is obviously a workflow system that works and delivers the goods, and seems that the clients agree, as Dan Gilmore explains: “We’ve worked on some of the most amazing games and films of the last few years – that’s a testament to our devotion to quality. We’ve been working with some of our clients for over five years; what really sets us apart is that we’re viewed by those clients as an indispensable part of

their team. We’re not only providing great images, we’re providing design thinking and creative leadership too.”

In just six years the Atomhawk team has come so far, agrees Wilson: “We’re currently recognised as one of the top studios in the world for producing art and design for the games industry. For example, we designed a number of the characters and environments for *Mortal Kombat X*, a game that has been a huge critical and commercial success.” Given such success all ready, how high is the studio setting its sights going forward? “We’d like to continue to work in the games space, but also to develop further relationships in the film, digital and advertising sectors, building on those that we already have with the likes of Marvel and Adam&Eve DDB (www.adamandevdeddb.com).”

■ A DAY IN THE LIFE OF TIM WILSON

THE HEAD OF OPERATIONS TALKS US THROUGH A JAM-PACKED DAY



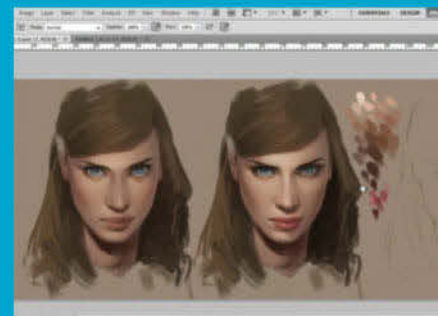
10:00 | MEETING TIME

Each week the production team and principal artists get together to discuss what’s on, how the week is panning out and any challenges on the horizon. By having an open forum early in the week, we make sure we’re prepared for whatever lies ahead!



11:00 | ARTIST ONE-TO-ONE

Every member of the team has a regular meeting with a principal artist and member of the production team. This is a great time for two-way feedback and to discuss areas like training and career development.



13:00 | LEARNING LUNCH

Once a month, one of our artists takes the team through a tutorial of how they work on a specific technique. This week, we learned how Charlie Bowater creates realistic digital skin when she paints.



KingRoad: Atomhawk created marketing images for Rumble Games' epic online role-playing action game featuring key characters from the troubled lands of Alderstone

5 TIPS FOR A SEAMLESS WORKFLOW

■ CUSTOMISE PHOTOSHOP

Photoshop is a versatile tool; it can be configured to suit your needs and aid your workflow. This may be as simple as the layout of the windows that work best for you, through to editing shortcuts.

■ ORGANISE YOUR FILES

Save your files regularly, keep them organised and back them up. There's nothing worse for professional relations than delivering the wrong work. Back your files up using the cloud or external hard drives.

■ FLIP THE CANVAS

You may think you have the right composition, but this is just your eyes getting used to what you're painting. If you flip the canvas horizontally or vertically, your eyes pick up any compositional issues.

■ KEEP IT SEPARATE

It's easy to get in to the habit of flattening layers, but this makes it hard to adjust a composition later. Try to keep layers for foreground and background elements separate, as well as characters or key objects.

■ QUICK COLOUR

When moving from black and white to colour, use a Gradient Map filter set to the Color blending mode to quickly experiment with different colour palettes.

“What really sets us apart is that we're viewed by clients as an indispensable part of their team. We're not only providing great images, we're providing design thinking and creative leadership too”

The Order 1866: Atomhawk reimagined five iconic cities in the style of *The Order, 1886*. The game is set in an alternate history where technology has developed rapidly and mystical beasts abound



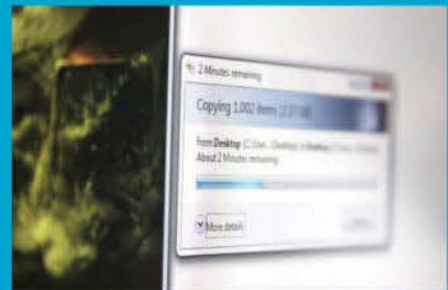
14:00 | BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Networking in the videogames industry is often clustered around key trade shows. This week we planned the talks we'll be giving at upcoming industry conferences Develop in Brighton and XDS in Vancouver, where we'll share how we created key visuals for Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy*.



16:00 | CLIENT BRIEFING

Video conference call between our team and the art directors at Warner Brothers to kick off a new project. We often work with clients in the USA, so Skype [has] become a [very] key part of our day-to-day communications.



18:00 | SUBMISSIONS

We send client's regular artwork submissions throughout the life of their project. This allows them to see things move from sketch to final polish, and helps head off any unexpected surprises. Feedback from the USA then lands overnight, ready for us to get onto in the morning.

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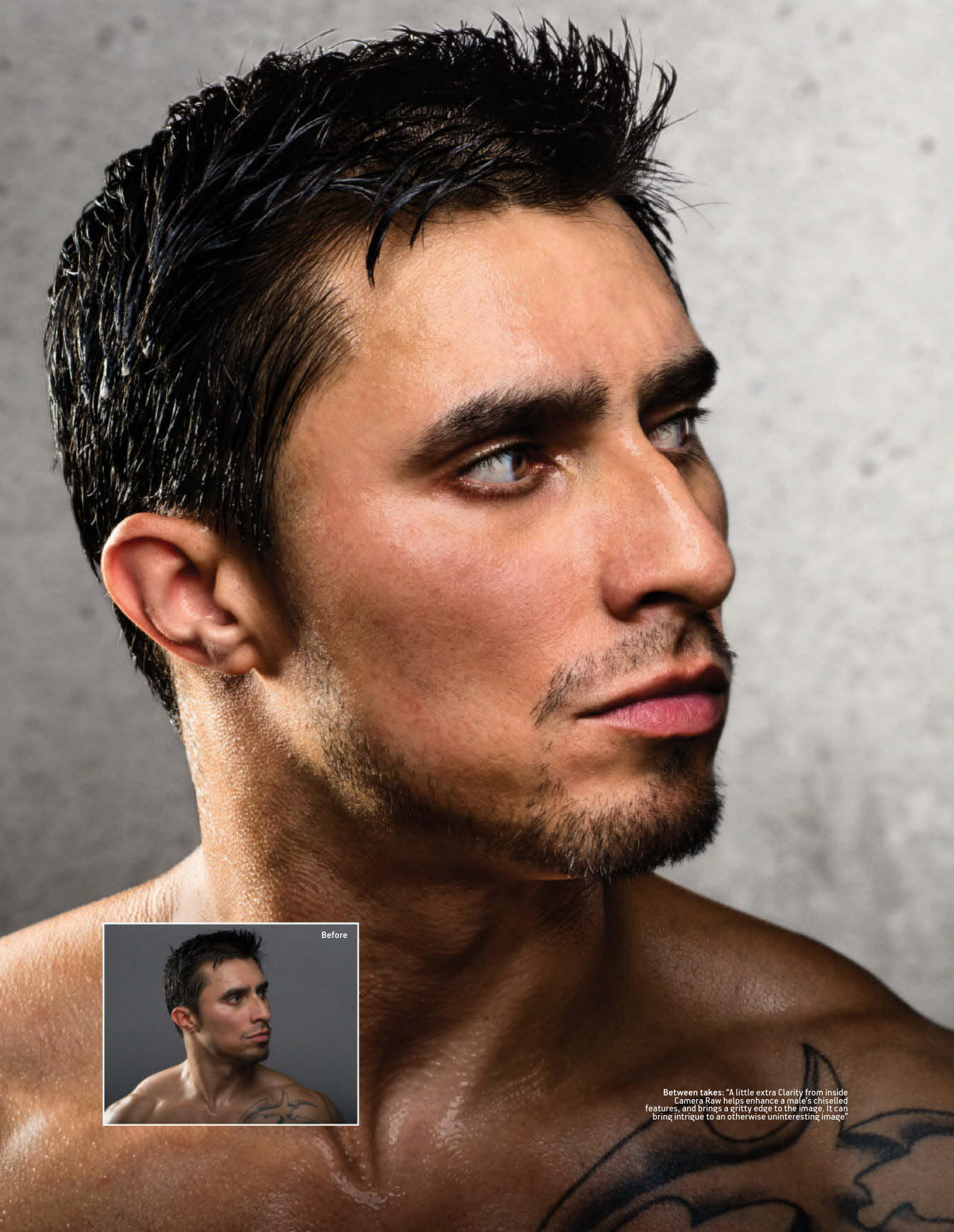
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Before

Between takes: "A little extra Clarity from inside Camera Raw helps enhance a male's chiselled features, and brings a gritty edge to the image. It can bring intrigue to an otherwise uninteresting image"

JOHN ROSS' EXPERT GUIDE TO NATURAL RETOUCHING

THIS PROFESSIONAL RETOUCHER SHARES HIS KEY TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR IMAGES AND EXPLAINS THE PROCESS BEHIND THIS ISSUE'S COVER IMAGE

John Ross' career has always involved cleaning up images in some way or another. Having graduated from studying illustration and commercial design, he took a job at Marvel. "My job was to make small changes like fixing hands or hair, but the art needed to match the original artist's style," he explains. Eight years ago, after working in the print industry for 15 years, Ross decided that it was time for a change. "I found a job [as] a photographer's studio manager, and one of the requirements was to do retouching. The style of shooting involved complicated lighting and situations. I became very skilled in Photoshop by fixing basic issues in a way that you could hopefully never tell what I've done. I've always strived to be as realistic and natural as possible. My job as a retoucher is to support the photographer, not overpower him with my own style."

"Primarily I do lifestyle and portraits," Ross continues. "It could be pretty models or CEOs of companies. It could be under harsh sunlight at the park, or in a darkened boardroom with cross lighting from multiple sources. I need to be very flexible and able to handle complicated situations. Very rarely do I work with controlled lighting in a studio shoot." This is a challenge that many retouchers will face – enhancing not the almost-perfection of a controlled studio image (which people may expect to look a little too perfect), but a less formal shot, which needs to look completely natural.

"My goal is to create the perfect photograph, not the perfect piece of art. I want the photographer to be proud of his image and not think about how I fixed it. It's like plastic surgery, if you can tell they were altered, then the surgeon didn't do a very good job."

So what are the key techniques would-be pro retouchers need to learn? "The two most important skills I would say you need to learn are

cloning and masking. The common point in both of those cases is that it's about the brushwork. You need to get very comfortable at painting, preferably with a Wacom tablet."

Retouching can be a controversial career, but for Ross the debates surrounding it boil down to how industry demands affect the work itself, often pushing retouchers' work beyond the boundaries of believable. "I think most of the problem is talking about all these different techniques to smooth out skin and give that porcelain look. That leads people to think they need to use Frequency Separation or Apply Image. I can honestly say that I've never used those techniques on a single image of mine. There are other ways to achieve the same end result."

John Ross now shares the skills that he has built up throughout his professional career, having founded The Art of Retouching (www.theartofretouching.com) in 2010. Determined to change the way that people learned retouching and Photoshop skills, he set up his site and packed it with the content that he believes Photoshop users



OUR EXPERT

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www.TheArtOfRetouching.com
[@ArtOfRetouching](https://twitter.com/ArtOfRetouching)

John educates photographers and retouchers by helping them expand their creativity through Photoshop from his website, and the classes he teaches from New Haven, Connecticut.

“I've always strived to be as realistic and natural as possible. My job as a retoucher is to support the photographer, not overpower him with my own style”

Boxer: "I used high contrast and bold colours to convey the emotion behind the shot. I love expressing my creativity further through tone and colour manipulation"



All images © John Ross



American inspiration: "Because the model was so expressive at this shoot, I chose to go with a hyper-contrasted image with bold bright colours"

and would-be retouchers really need. "I have free videos for every skill level from basic to professional. On the basic side I have many five-minute videos that help get people started in a very non-threatening way. Everything is very easy to follow. For professionals I have videos that go up to an hour that talk about being a professional in the industry and the different challenges that I face behind the scenes. I also offer three paid courses that go from basics to intermediate level retouching. I have two other advanced courses that I am still developing. It just takes so much time to put it all together. I tell you though, when I see a student get from one side to the other, all that trouble is so worth it."

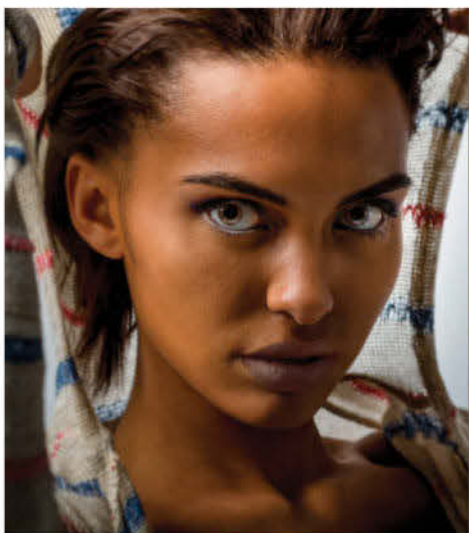
He does see many students who struggle, and this affects the quality of their retouching work. "Anybody with a computer and \$10 can now use Photoshop. Many people taught themselves, and they lack the skill set or proper control over the tools. They don't

know what they are looking for, or how to fix it... Cloning is a topic students struggle with. They need to develop the hand-eye coordination, and it just takes time to practice. Another big one is not having a calibrated monitor. They will bring in homework assignments and the colour and tone are all over the place. So I help them with what they should be purchasing. Another common issue is random layering. A core fundamental I teach is which layer type goes where for best results, and easiest editing."

The laborious workflow required of a retoucher can also affect the quality of a final image, tipping it over the fine line between believable and fake. "When you spend over seven hours retouching, it's very easy to overwork it. I do it too," Ross admits. "I always try to remind myself that my goal is to look as if [the image] came straight out of the camera. If something no longer matches that, then it needs to be fixed if possible... [Also], when I sit there staring for hours on end, it's

really easy to have my eyes glaze over and my tonal range flatten out. So, periodically I will have Lightroom automatically handle the contrast and that helps snap my brain back into what's visually appealing as opposed to being stuck in the flat midtones."

Ross typically works between Camera Raw, Lightroom and Photoshop, pointing out that each has specific functionality that the others don't and that all of them are necessary to his workflow. "My file layers are always built the same [way]. Not only is it predictable, but amazingly efficient. My adjustment layers are on top of pixel layers, which are on top of Smart Objects. It's very easy for me to make alterations on one layer without affecting previous changes on other layers," he says. Ross also believes "All the best retouchers know five different ways to do anything. Because sometimes one way just doesn't work. That means you need to know many different ways to approach the same problem."



JOIN JOHN ROSS FOR A RETOUCHING MASTERCLASS

THE RETOUCHING PRO WILL BE LEADING A BEAUTY AND FASHION STUDIO WORKFLOW CLASS IN LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK ON 4 OCTOBER 2015

Want to learn how to manage an efficient, non-destructive workflow, get the most from Photoshop and master the key skills you need to become a pro retoucher? John Ross is holding an all-day Beauty and Fashion Studio Workflow class in East Norwich, NY, on 4 October 2015. Covering everything from shooting to final edits, this is your chance to see him at work, and to ask those Photoshop questions you have been dying to know. Not only will you enhance your Photoshop and photography skills, but you will also learn about what it takes to succeed in the industry – whether you're a freelancer, a retouching newbie, or an aspiring photographer.

Prices were still to be confirmed at the time of going to press. The event is being held at Pine Hollow Country Club, 6601 Route 25A, East Norwich, NY 11732, USA on 4 October 2015. For more information and to book, visit www.TheArtOfRetouching.com/beauty-fashion-event.

"For those who can't make it," says Ross, "The event will also be available live streaming over the internet. We really are trying to reach as many people as we can, with quality professional advice on getting started as a retoucher or photographer in the industry. Once you have a solid roadmap to follow from beginning to end, it all makes perfect sense. That's what I hope to share with everyone."



JOHN ROSS' TOP TEN RETOUCHING TIPS

ESSENTIAL ADVICE TO HELP YOU IMPROVE YOUR RETOUCHING TECHNIQUES

1. START IN RAW

Start your image processing with a RAW processor like Camera Raw or Lightroom before bringing it into Photoshop. Remember that those tools are designed specifically for photographs, and you will achieve the desired results faster and with greater accuracy.

2. DON'T GO TOO CLOSE-UP

Unless you expect the image will be printed at 400%, then don't work in Photoshop that way. Stop pixel-peeping; no one will ever see that detail but you. Be concerned more with the overall impression than the technical precision.

3. VIEW IN TWO WINDOWS

Go to Window>Arrange>New Window to create a second display of the image. You can keep one window zoomed out, while you zoom in for more detailed work. This will keep you focused on how everything looks at once, without getting pulled into every single detail.

4. USE SMART OBJECTS AND FILTERS

Smart Objects and Smart Filters will greatly enhance your workflow. This is because all of your settings and sliders for each of your filters are always available for you to tweak and adjust whenever you want. The strength is that you can always jump around to different sections without being locked into anything.

5. LEARN LIGHT SCULPTING TECHNIQUES

By understanding that the eye is drawn to light areas instead of dark areas, you can manipulate where someone is drawn to when looking at the image. This is referred to as light sculpting, and it allows you to enhance the viewing experience by drawing the attention to the most important areas like faces.

6. TONE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN COLOUR

Use a temporary Black and White adjustment layer to ensure your tones flow through the image with highlights and shadows in a way that enhances the viewing experience. Remember, tone trumps colour. This is because colour can be wrong and still look good. However, if the tone is wrong, it looks obvious.

7. KNOW YOUR ADJUSTMENT TOOLS

The primary adjustment layers in Photoshop are Curves, Selective Color, and Hue/Saturation. You can do anything with these three adjustments. For more variety, you can add Levels, Vibrance and Black and White to control your colours and tones. If you follow this tip, all the other adjustments can be ignored.

8. MASTER MASKING TOOLS

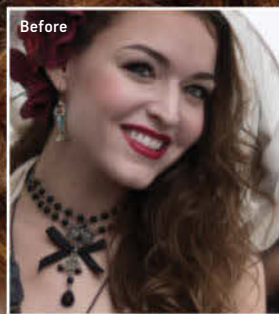
Masking with Color Range and Quick Mask are the keys to success in Photoshop. The combination of these will allow you [to] make quick and accurate masks for all of your adjustment layers. Once you become familiar with these, all the other tools like Magic Wand, Quick Selection and Lasso become less useful.

9. QUICKLY VIEW BEFORE AND AFTER

You will often want to view before and after changes. Try holding down the Alt/Opt button and click on the eye of the single layer you would like to view. This will save the trouble of clicking off and on each of the individual layers.

10. TAKE YOUR TIME UPDATING SOFTWARE

When CC 2014 came out, plug-ins, actions, filters and scripts were temporarily broken. When CC 2015 was released, the Healing brush became completely unusable for a while. When new versions of Photoshop are available, do not update it on your primary production computer. At the very least, keep the previous version around just in case.



Mermaid beauty: "I wanted to use a softer and warmer palette with only a hint of blue. The image wasn't the sharpest, so I used Filters>Sharpen>Shake Reduction to avoid sharpening the noise too"



Before

NATURAL BEAUTY RETOUCHING

LEARN HOW TO RETOUCH A NATURAL AND FRESH-LOOKING BEAUTY PIECE

Beauty retouching gets a bad reputation because all too often, the changes get pushed to an extreme, and the image loses all sense of what is realistic. When you know how to work the subtle magic of Photoshop, you can bring out the beauty in any given piece — flaws and all.

When you think about the purpose of beauty retouching, you would most likely want to create the perfect image — one that's flawless and without blemish. However, the truth of retouching lies in the flaws that you leave behind. The real trick of it is to know which details to correct, and

which imperfections to leave behind. Retouching every single detail can be overkill, and subtle is always best. Whenever you leave behind a stray hair, a birthmark, or a simple patch of a model's naturally gifted freckles, you keep a photo looking fresh and real at the same time.

Remember, once you are done retouching your photo, your viewer should not be able to notice that anything changed at all, except that the photo looks amazing. Leave a few imperfections to de-emphasize the overall perfection you are striving for. After all, true beauty doesn't need to call for attention, so why should your retouching?

GENERAL CORRECTIONS

DO SOME HOUSEKEEPING, THEN DIRECT YOUR VIEWER'S EYE TO WHERE IT SHOULD BE

01 HAVE CLEAR OBJECTIVES

Compile a list of items that will need to be addressed. Is the overall image too bright, too flat, or even too green? Take note of the following: clumpy eyelashes, flyaway hairs, skin discolourations, tilted frame, etc. Armed with the most obvious changes that are needed, you can envision what needs to be worked on first, and what can wait until last.

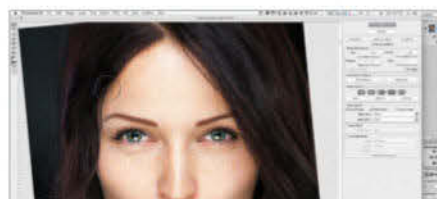
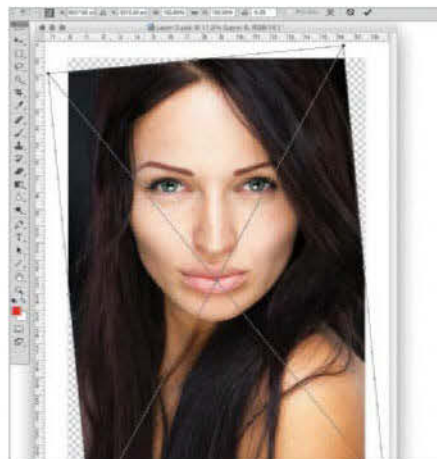


03 USE LIQUIFY TO RESHAPE

In order to refine the misaligned areas in an image, use Filter>Liquify to reduce the nose and drop down the hairline. Be sure to click Advanced Mode, and lower the Pressure to 15. You can also centre the lips and reshape them. Remember to go subtly and you should do just fine.

02 START WITH GEOMETRIC ISSUES

Geometry should often come first. Ask yourself if your photo is tilted, or if the perspective is off. Drag a guide out from the rulers to the centre of the subject's face. Double-click on the Background layer, then click OK so that it becomes editable. Then rotate it with Edit>Free Transform so that the face is square in the frame.



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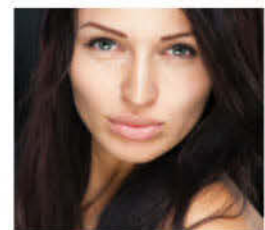
John educates photographers and retouchers by helping them expand their creativity through Photoshop from his website, and the classes he teaches from New Haven, Connecticut.

SOURCE FILES

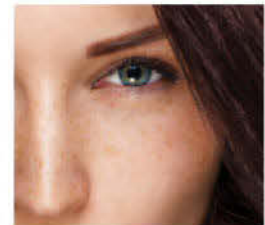
You may purchase the main image from <http://bit.ly/1Ti4NHU> and you can find supporting images for the hair and skin on www.filesilo.co.uk/advancedphotoshop.

WORK IN PROGRESS

THE SUBTLE TRANSFORMATION OF BEAUTY



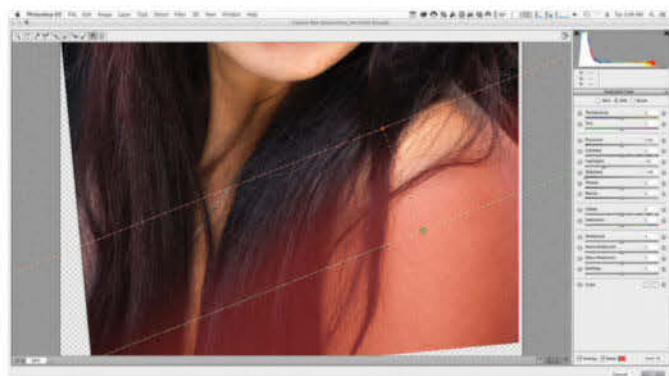
Progress 1: General changes



Progress 2: Detailed work



Progress 3: Refinements



04 CORRECT THE TONE AND COLOUR

The next issues that you should concern yourself with are your basic colour and tonal corrections. This kind of adjustment cannot always be efficiently done inside Photoshop itself. What you need instead is to make your corrections with Filter> Camera Raw. Camera Raw helps you balance your image with just a few slider adjustments. General changes can be within the Basic panel, but more targeted changes can be done with the Adjustment brush. You can mask different areas and experiment with colour and tone to see which adjustments can enhance the image.

06 CHECK YOUR TONE

When you're nose-deep in a project, it's easy to get lost in the details and forget the overall tone of your image. Sometimes, you need to step back and check how you're doing. Simply remove the colour in your photo and view the image in black and white. This will help you to understand how the tones affect the image. At this early stage, the tonal balance doesn't need to be perfect. What's crucial is that you're able to establish how the viewer's eye should navigate the image.

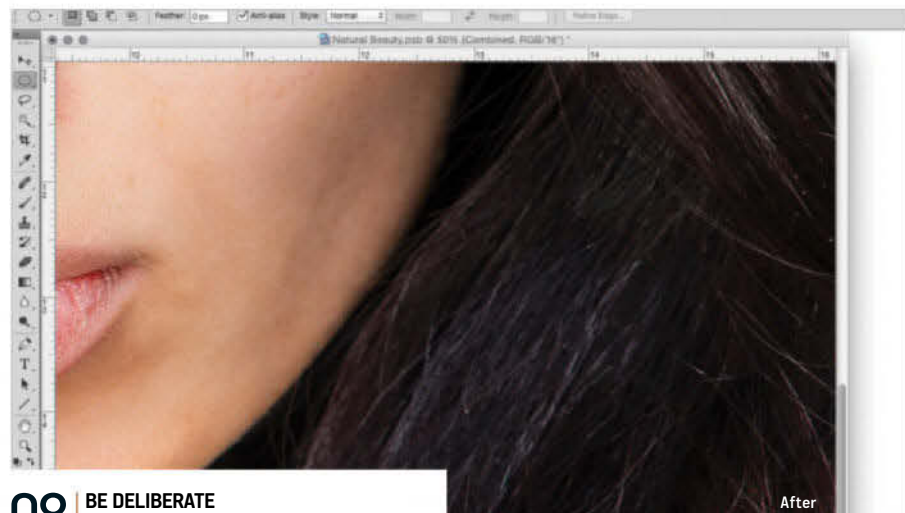


QUICK TIP: MANAGE LIGHTS AND DARKS

The play of lights and darks creates much-needed depth on flat paper. Make sure that the face is the brightest area of the photo, i.e. the eyes, nose, and mouth. Be careful not to make the whites of the eyes and teeth too bright, though. They are curves, so there should be some lights and shadows as the objects contour around.

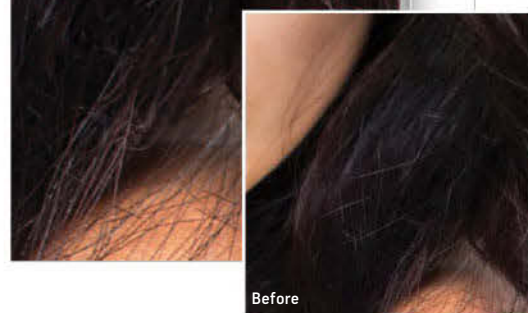
07 CLEAN UP YOUR IMAGE

Now that you've got the core issues fixed, it's time to start cleaning up your image. Use the Healing brush to remove the stray hairs, the discoloured skin, and the other blemishes. To start, create a new blank layer and name it Cloning (always make a habit of naming your layers properly to avoid confusion in the future). Move fairly quickly through the entire image. Get rid of the worst and most obvious imperfections. Don't worry about the finer details; just do a general clean-up.



08 BE DELIBERATE

When cloning and healing, especially in a beauty piece, be sure to follow along the contours of the textures. Don't just randomly cover over the hairs and blemishes if you don't want your image to end up looking like you went crazy with the Cloning brush. Try to be as deliberate as you can with each click. Remember that every stroke needs to have a purpose, especially since you want your adjustments to look as subtle as possible.

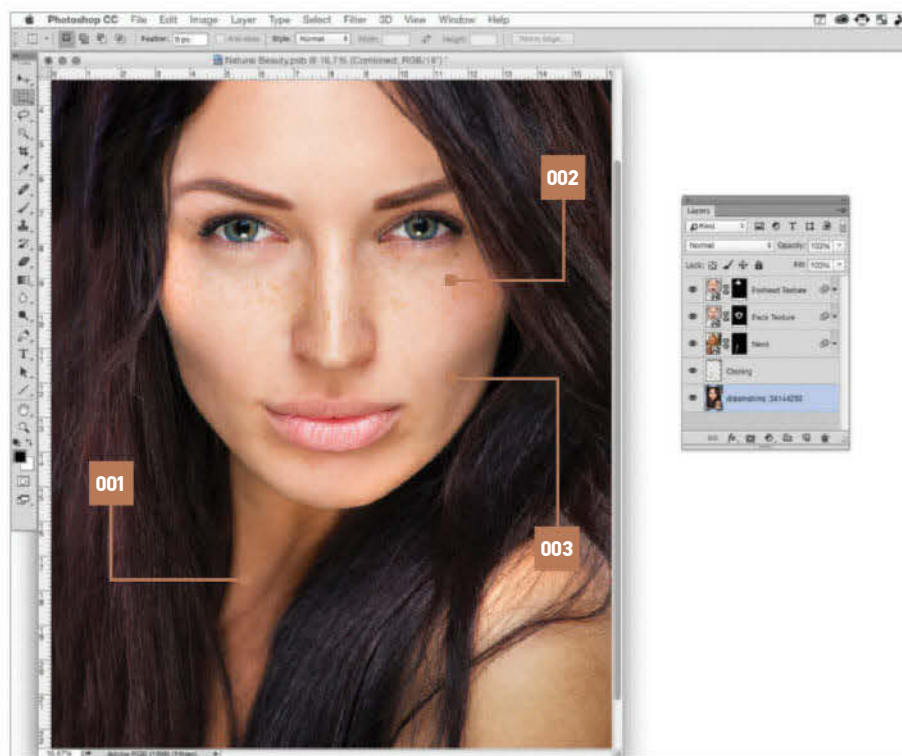


ALL ABOUT GRAFTING

COMPOSITING FROM ALTERNATIVE IMAGES HELPS YOU PERFECT IMPERFECTIONS

09 DO SOME SKIN GRAFTING

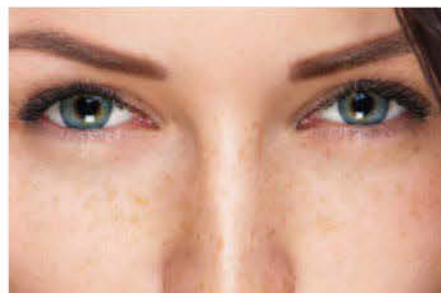
Sometimes the image might not have all the detail you need. Missing pores and other textures are common problems. When that happens, turn to skin grafting. This is when you take parts from another similar image, and composite them together. By matching the colour and tone, you can blend the similar areas from the two images together.



001 | NECK GRAFTING
There are too many loose hairs, so replace the neck with a similar image. Match the colour and blend in the sides

002 | FACE GRAFTING
Other problem areas include the forehead, cheeks and chin. You will need to take a similar image and graft as well

003 | PAINTING DETAILS BACK
Sections of skin have detail while others have little. Place the alternate image and use a layer mask to paint details back in



11 IMPROVE THE EYE AREA

At first glance, the eyebrows of the model are just too clean and perfect. Bear in mind that sometimes, the most perfect details are the ones that look the most unnatural. To remedy this, replace the eyebrows from another model. Correct the colour to match the hairs as well. Then, use Filter>Liquify to touch up and adjust the eyebrow shape a little more. Also paint in eyelashes with a very small brush. Use two layers, one for dark lashes and one for light lashes. Then you can adjust the layer's opacity as desired.



12 BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR COLOURS

Parts of the hair are reflecting a warm brown colour, and other areas are a cooler blue colour. Use a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer set to 0-15-0, with Colorize checked. Select the layer mask and use Edit>Fill Color>Black. Then paint with a white brush, to bring back the warmer brown colour over the top of the cooler areas. This is to make it more consistent. To make the hair on the shoulder more full, add some hair extensions from another model. Find similar hair, and then use Filter>Liquify to better match the natural contours.



10 ACCENTUATE THE LIPS

To make the lips of the model look irresistible, soften the lips with the Healing brush. Remove the worst looking cracks, and then replace the lips with a similarly shaped, but nicely lit shine. Resize with Edit>Free Transform, and mix layers with the Blend Mode>Lighter Color. This will emphasise the lustrous shine on the lips. Afterwards, colourise the lips with Layer>Adjustment Layers>Black and White, and enable a Tint. Doing it this way will allow you to better mix and blend using the various sliders.

“The truth of retouching lies in the flaws that you leave behind”



13 CLONE ON THE HAIR

Sometimes, areas are too complex and require the Spot Healing Brush set to Content Aware. This tool has come a long way since its introduction, and no longer needs to be avoided. This will allow you to remove the thin hair, and let Photoshop automatically match the surrounding areas. Continue to remove stray strands by cloning in the areas where hair generally goes in one direction and random ones go the other way. Many, but not all of them, need to be removed.

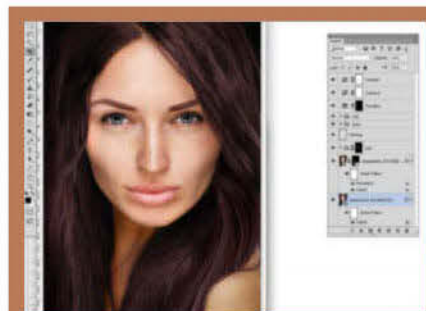
OVERALL LOOK AND FEEL

DETERMINE THE TONE OF YOUR BEAUTY PIECE BY PLAYING WITH LIGHT AND SHADOWS



14 DODGE AND BURN

The eyes are the windows to the soul, so pay as much attention to them as you can, especially in a beauty piece. To truly make those eyes pop, add highlights and shadows to them with a dodge and burn technique. If you'll notice, the eyes from the original image were flat and lacked any real punch. By adding lights and shadows, you can add more contour and curvature to otherwise dull features in your beauty model.



WORK SMART IN PHOTOSHOP

Retouching a beauty piece cannot be done in one go. There will likely be misplaced layers, incorrect cloning, and frustrating do-overs. As you work on a variety of images, knowing how to use all the sliders and buttons in Photoshop is important. But even more so, you need to create a workflow that will give fast, consistent, and repeatable results. For example, create a list of changes to use as a guide so you don't miss anything. Use Smart Objects and adjustment layers for non-destructive editing. Finally, learn and rely on techniques that prove themselves invaluable time and again.

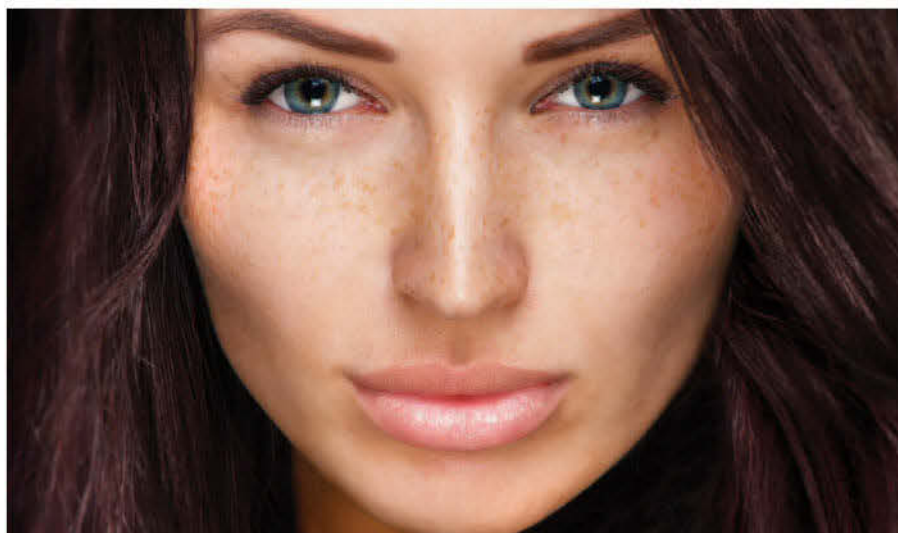


15 USE CURVES TO DODGE AND BURN

One way to Dodge and Burn is to use Curves. Create two Curves adjustment layers and fill the masks with Edit>Fill>Black to create a black mask instead of a white mask. One Curve should be pulled up for lightening, while the other Curve pulled down should be for darkening. Now, you can use a white paint brush set to 10% or 20% on the layer mask to start brushing in areas that you want to make lighter or darker, depending on which layer mask you paint on.

16 ADD SHADOWS TO THE FACE

While you are doing all of these general adjustments in tone, don't forget to do the same for the face of your model as well. Go ahead and add some lights and shadows to the face. You may be able to use the same Curves layer that was used for the eyes if you want. For more control, create a new set of light and dark Curves just like before. A bonus tip is that you can create a Window>Actions>New Action to automatically create and name these Curves layers for you.



18 MIND THE OVERALL COLOUR PALETTE

Notice how the colour palette of this image mixes yellows, reds, and browns. Did you find it odd that the overall palette is a very monotonous colour scheme? That, too, is deliberate. The only deviation is the eye colour.

QUICK TIP: KEEP IT SUBTLE

Remember: always apply your adjustments and effects with control. The only time your audience should be able to see what you've truly done is when you show them the before and the after photos – that is when they will see the small, but significant changes you've made.



17 USE IRIS BLUR

When you have finished all the retouching, and want to call this image complete, do one last thing to really help it sing. Select the top layer and hit Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Option+Shift+E. Photoshop will merge a copy of all visible layers onto a new layer right on top. Use Filter>Blur Gallery>Iris Blur and adjust the default oval to better match the face shape. Leave the blur at 15px, and click OK to add Depth of Field.



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“The most important idea I always transmit, is to think of a visual as if it were a movie”



PARADISE COVE PEDRO FERNANDES

ARQUI9 IS KNOWN FOR ITS EYE-CATCHING ARCH-VIS IMAGES. PEDRO FERNANDES EXPLAINS THE PROCESS BEHIND THEM

Pedro Fernandes is well aware of his company's reputation, and says, "As many may know... Arqui9 Visualisation (www.arqui9.com) specialises in architectural visualisation, and [our] peculiar post-produced images... end up having a particular look to them. The most important idea I always transmit, is to think of a visual as if it were a movie."

What he means is that Arqui9's still images are approached in the same way a director approaches the workflow of a film – the initial footage (or in this case, image) is shot or rendered in a basic state, 2D and 3D VFX are added, lights, dust, particles and other atmospheric enhancements are sprinkled liberally, and then the final grading of colour and tone happens. "This is generally the workflow we

try and follow and it has worked for the majority of the images we produce," Fernandes observes. "Before any process begins we often do some quick research and brainstorm various ideas for a visual. In this case we were inspired by the saturated bluish and green tones with white sands and how they correlate directly to our usual preconceptions of a beach paradise."

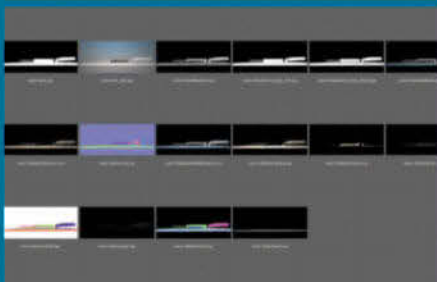


© Pedro Fernandes



01 RAW RENDER FROM 3D RENDER ENGINE

It all starts with a low quality raw render, simple and without overdone textures or 3D elements. It's important to develop a sense of light and shadow; this is the starting point for the rest of the drawing. I say drawing as it's still an initial art concept with all its flexibility.



02 3D PASSES

These are our base elements that are used for facilitating selections, for enhancing light and atmospheric lighting conditions. Once again these aren't set in stone and depend on the creative use we give to them, for instance in this case we used a Raw Shadow pass to control the bluish tones of the shadows, having set this to Screen mode with a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer attached to it.



03 BREAKING DOWN THE IMAGE

From the very first initial sketches and mockups, the distinction between foreground, midground and background was always an important element, not only because of the one-point perspective, but also to give as much of a storyline and the maximum visual interest as possible.



04 | VALUE CHECK

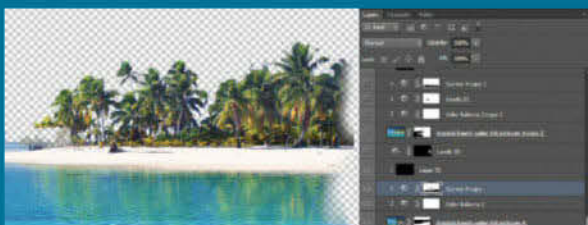
We adjust the white and black points to match the plate or depth values. For instance, the further back in space an element is, the less contrast and saturation it has, due to the haze and

atmosphere in the scene. This of course can vary in accordance with climate, time of day and geography – that's why having a solid photo reference base is essential.



05 | COLOUR CORRECT

Generally once we have the value set we then adjust saturation values (generally creating less saturation with a Desaturate adjustment layer) and then colour-correct. As a very final touch we add a dodge layer, which we paint black and then brush in with little bits of light to emphasise.



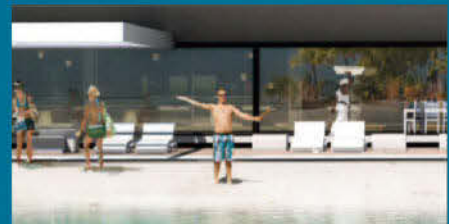
06 | INDIVIDUAL CORRECTIONS

The foreground has quite heavily contrasted trees, which project dark shadows with a mix of light. This helps to frame the main building's form and gradually provide steps to lead our eye to it. Behind the main building, in regards to the vegetation, we elevated the black value with a Curves adjustment and then added more colour in the blue channel to match the tint that the sky would project onto the vegetation.



07 | ADD EXTRA LIGHTING

We can also use this phase to add extra lighting effects, be it dust or particles in the air, painted with a brush that has scattering activated or simply painting the lens flare effect on bright spots with a Soft brush. This can also be applied to water effect glare.



STORYTELLING SECRETS

ACCORDING TO ARQUI9, THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF ANY IMAGE

"Our motto is 'Architectural stories through images', which represents our way of interpreting a visual. Visuals are about the substance that is involved, the architecture and how it relates to the lives of those who live around it. Only time will tell if our interpretations live up to reality. These stories help the viewer interpret, apprehend and feel the spaces that are being created. For example, the background here mixes leisure and activities and of course someone taking a photo with a selfie stick. In order to make a great visual you must understand how the brain interprets information and what it expects to encounter, you must lead the eye through a series of loops, controlled by both technical and emotional qualities in any piece. A great technical piece will not necessarily make it a great artistic piece."



08 | FINAL GRADING

As with any film footage we usually add our final grading at the end. Grading is one of our preferred phases, as it very quickly enables us to give [a] totally different feeling to an image within a matter of seconds. We usually use a Hue/Saturation layer set to Colorize and with the blend mode set to Soft Light. This will enable a very quick grade, which we can then fine-tune through Color Balance and Curves adjustments.

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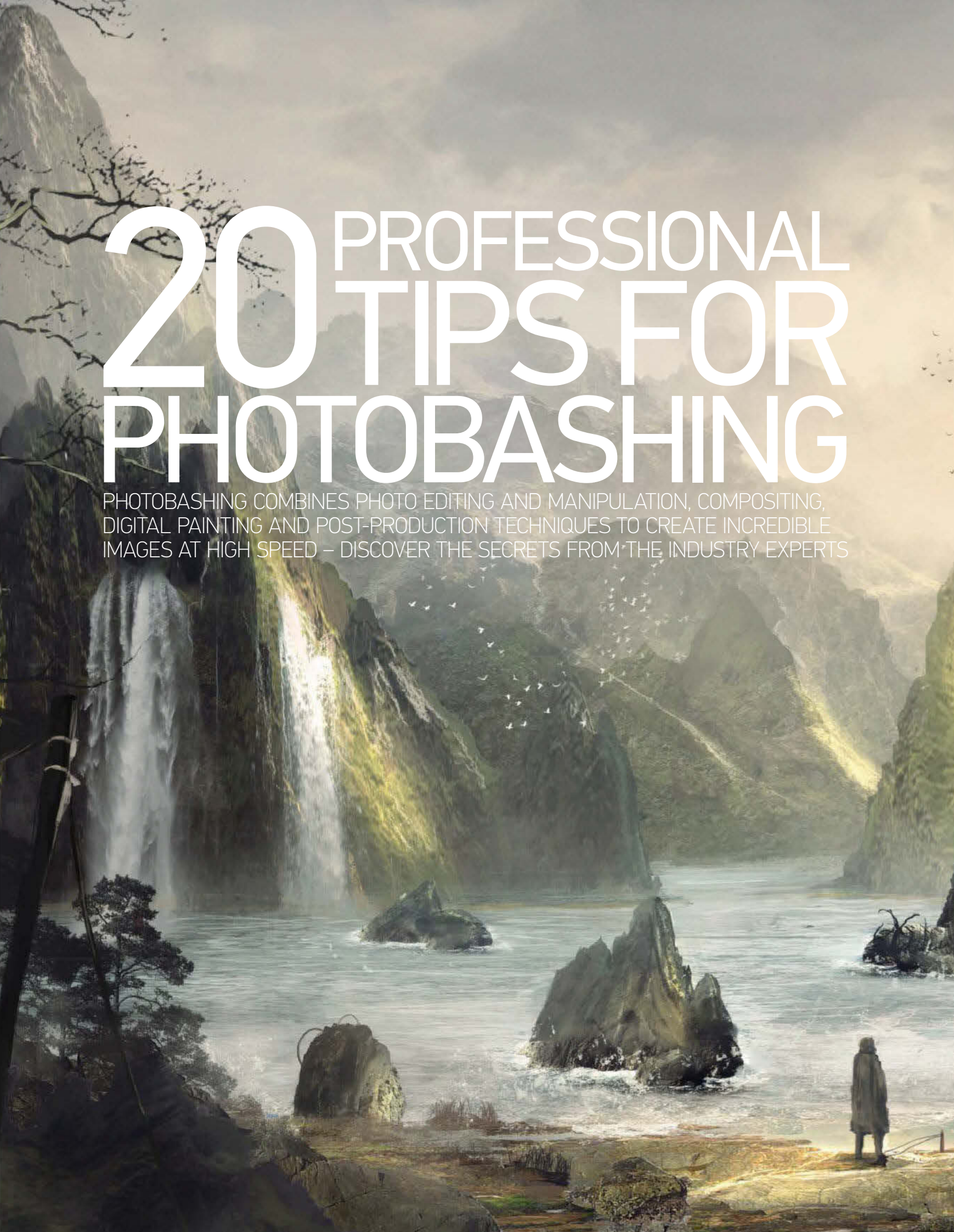
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20 PROFESSIONAL TIPS FOR PHOTOBASHING

PHOTOBASHING COMBINES PHOTO EDITING AND MANIPULATION, COMPOSITING, DIGITAL PAINTING AND POST-PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES TO CREATE INCREDIBLE IMAGES AT HIGH SPEED – DISCOVER THE SECRETS FROM THE INDUSTRY EXPERTS

01. THE CONTROVERSY OF PHOTOBASHING

While photobashing is a recognised legitimate technique, especially when it comes to creating quick concept art, there are plenty of critics of the style, some going as far as to call it cheating. A lot of this stems down to the classification of the

style as digital painting and the overuse of photography, essentially creating a photomontage, as well as the potential copyright pitfalls. Here are our top tips for creating a good photobash, without falling foul of online critics:

START WITH A SKETCH

Just as if you were doing a pure digital painting, come up with a concept and composition for the base of your artwork.

USE MINIMAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The idea is to add in details and textures that you can't, or would take a long time to, paint.

BE WARY OF COPYRIGHT

Where possible, use your own photography or stick to legitimate stock sources.

DO PLENTY OF PAINTING

This isn't a photo collage, it's a digital painting with a little photo help. Overpaint your photos, blend them together and make heavy use of brushes.

© Jakub Swoj





JR

© Jorry Rosman 2015

02. WHY USE THE PHOTOBASH TECHNIQUE?

There are lots of purposes for using photobashing, though it does have its controversies. For many, like freelance concept artist Jorry Rosman (www.artstation.com/artist/jorry), it is a way of saving time when creating complex concepts: "I use the photobashing technique to save time. Using photos provides me with shapes, colours and textures that I might be able to paint myself, but would take me

way longer than using a photo. And speed and clarity (in material and shape) is important to me as a concept artist.

"I also don't consider concept art as fine art, or something that's made to be framed and put on a wall (even though concept art can be beautiful), so I'm not too concerned with how the image is made. It's all means to an end. Only the end result counts.

"I do, however, make sure to never use artistic photography pictures or work from other artists. The pictures I do use are either from my own collection or have changed so much that they are unrecognisable. There have been some heated debates on the internet lately [about whether] using photos is cheating, and I think it is. But, especially in concept art, cheating is good! Just be mindful about it."



03. USE PHOTOBASHING FOR SCI-FI CREATIONS

Photobashing can be used for many different genres, but one in which it is used heavily is sci-fi scenes, Sebastien Hue (www.shue-digital.com) explains: "The photobashing technique is very useful when you need to quickly brainstorm and create a concept from scratch, particularly when science-fiction and technologies are at stake. When you don't have the mental capacity to get a clear concept image in your brain, even though

you know that you want – let's say a robot concept, a mecha or even a cityscape – by photobashing bits and pieces of stocks you help yourself in getting a solid base to work on. [This helps to] develop [the concept] more efficiently and more quickly, because you are visualising the evolution immediately. On top of that, you can achieve a photorealistic result and not just a sketchy concept."

Tutorial in French on Tuto.com by Sebastien Hue (<http://fr.tuto.com/photoshop/faire-un-concept-art-de-robot-en-photo-bashing-photoshop-49228.html>)

04. USE STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

FREELANCE CONCEPT ARTIST SEBASTIEN HUE BREAKS DOWN ONE OF HIS AMAZING PHOTOBASH CREATIONS, SHOWING HOW STOCK IMAGERY IS MANIPULATED INTO A COMPLETE ARTWORK



01 | USE YOUR IMAGINATION
Imagination is very important in photobashing, because you need to see beyond just pieces of stock. In this case, I just took a photo of a car motor as a start for the head of my robot concept. Then I developed the rest of the face with other elements that would help the design of the character.



02 | BLEND AND BE ACCURATE
In greyscale, I tried to blend the elements together through colour corrections or [digital] painting to create something coherent and consistent. I tried to have a head that looks like a head and so anatomical notions are key points as well when tackling characters, even for robots.



03 | BUILD THE CONCEPT
Here I developed the concept further by texturing the materials of the robot through metal and rust textures. The light source is very important when selecting your stocks, so I fleshed out my concept keeping that in mind, paying attention to which stocks I picked to avoid incoherent reflections and heavy corrections.



© SHUE-DIGITAL



05. PICK THE PERFECT PHOTOS

Finding the right images for your photobash work is really important, as Tony Andreas Rudolph explains: "I select the images [based on the] perspective and light direction that I need for my concept. When I want to print the final result, or when it will be used for a more detailed view, sharpness and noise inside the images are very important. Colours are not so important... However, as well as finding the right images, you also

need to be careful where you are sourcing the images from and how they will be used. "I am always looking for my resources really carefully, as well as using my own images. I mostly look for images in the DeviantArt Stock Image section and on Flickr with the Advanced Search set to find only images where it is allowed to use them for commercial work and where I am able to edit them."



Before

After

06. FIND LEGITIMATE FREE STOCK SOURCES



Personal photography: The easiest way to get stock imagery for your photobash projects is to take your own pictures. You don't need to be an expert photographer for this, as you will be painting over your photos anyway. Similarly, you don't need a DSLR; your phone camera will suffice. Get used to snapping anything and everything, as you never know where you might find a use for that leaf, engine part or wall pattern.



Courtesy of gratisography.com

High-quality free stock: Recently there has been a spate of websites that offer completely free high-resolution imagery for use in any way you like – even commercial imagery. This is a great solution, as you are assured quality over other free sites and you won't fall foul of copyright issues. Check the terms and conditions, though, as you may have to leave a credit with your artwork when displayed. Subject matters are limited though. Websites to check out: unsplash.com, picjumbo.com and www.gratisography.com.



© CGTextures.com

Texture resources: Photo textures should not be overlooked, as they are important for adding minute detail to painted elements, such as rock or wood. They can help to build the photorealism of a piece without taking away from the painterly overall feel. There are plenty of free stock sites that offer textures (as well as those available with this magazine), but the best ones to look at include cgtextures.com and www.texturepalace.com.



Courtesy of masyon.deviantart.com

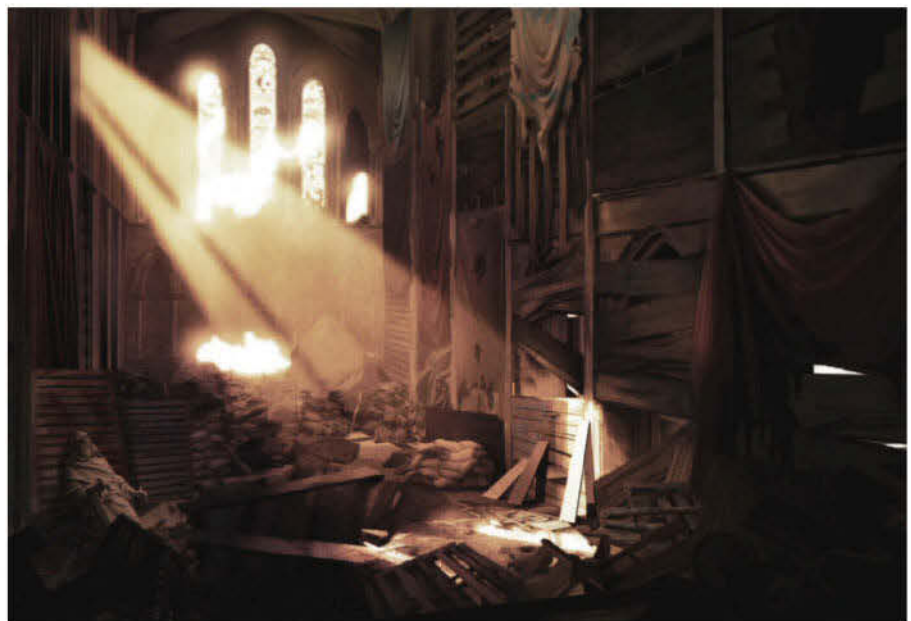
DeviantArt: A popular place to display photobash artwork is on DeviantArt (www.deviantart.com). It is also a common source for finding stock photography. Go to Browse>Resources and Stock Images to start looking. A number of photographers and artists have kindly put their work up to be used by other digital artists, but it is very important that you are aware that not every artist has the same rules – some are for personal use only, some need attribution and others let you do anything you like.

07. KEY TOOLS FOR EDITING PHOTOS

PHOTOSHOP PROVIDES THE ESSENTIAL TOOLS NEEDED TO BRING LOTS OF PHOTOS TOGETHER INTO ONE SCENE. FREELANCE CONCEPT ARTIST JORRY ROSMAN RUNS US THROUGH HIS KEY TOOLS



Photoshop toolset: Mashing pictures in to one cohesive image might prove to be difficult at times, but luckily Photoshop provides a huge array of options and tricks that you can use to tie all the different elements together



© Ricardo Guimaraes

08. PHOTOBASH FOR CLIENT WORK

Photobashing is often used when an artist is required to create concept art for clients, who need quick turnarounds of ideas. "Many companies today require realistic works from the artists and the deadlines are always short, so it became a sort of a standard in the industry to use some photobash techniques in order to reach the desired level of finish," says environment concept artist Ricardo Guimaraes (www.rgconceptdesign.com). "Using photobashing is all about speeding up the process of creating concepts and finished images with a realism otherwise impossible within the

same timeframe. Sometimes, painting everything, up to the smallest detail, incorporating lighting information correctly, is a very tiresome and painstaking process taking a long time. When you get the photo properly integrated with your painting, not only does the photo already provide you with the information needed, but also serves as a basis to some adjustments on the painting itself. Combine the photobashing technique with the use of custom brushes and also some good (indispensable) knowledge of drawing and painting, and you have the most powerful arsenal [any] one artist may have."



Channel selections: I cut trees and other types of foliage from photos using the RGB Channels. I look for the Channel that gives me the most contrast, copy it and level the channel to a point where there is only black and white left

Blending modes: I also make use of different blending modes (especially Lighten and Darken) and blending options (via the Layer Style dialog) to blend photos into my image

Photo editing: I almost always use a Smart Blur or a Reduce Noise on my photos to get rid of the sharpness, and the Match Color option is a great tool for unifying all the different colours into a specific palette

Mixer Brush tool: After adding the photos, I like to touch the whole image with the Mixer Brush tool to unify the image even more and give it a painterly feel, which tends to be a bit easier on the eyes

© Jorry Rosman

© Travis Wright 2015



09. UNDERSTAND THE FUNDAMENTALS

"Don't even start photobashing until you have a decent grasp of your basic art fundamentals such as perspective, colour and lighting, composition and anatomy," insists freelance concept artist and illustrator Travis Wright (apneicmonkey.deviantart.com). "I've seen a lot of people try to jump right into photobashing and wonder why it's not working for them. It's a misconception that because you are using photo elements, the hard work is already done and piecing them together should guarantee amazing results. Photobashing is so much more than just adding some motorcycle parts to a cool photo of a soldier."

Wright applies his own advice to his projects, by starting with a sketch and choosing the right photos

to work with: "I'll start my photobashes just like I would any illustration or painting: with sketches to work out the composition, colour and mood.

"It's important that you treat photobashing as seriously as you would any other art discipline. It can save you time and look great only after you have a good grasp of your basics."

Wright goes on to say, "I would also recommend to anyone that they work on having their own easily accessible stock of photos. This works in your favour both for legal reasons, as you already own the copyright to any photos you use and also, sometimes, the internet doesn't have what you want and you don't want to use up any of that time you're now saving by going on extensive image searches."

10. DON'T BE TOO LITERAL PICKING STOCK

Getting the right stock for your photobash creations is key, but you need to think outside of the box when it comes to finding the right photos to use, says Jorry Rosman: "The trick is to slap a couple of pictures on top of each other and play with the different blending modes. I like to go crazy with scaling and rotating pictures and see if I can find some cool shapes. This works best when all the pictures are in greyscale. Don't be too literal in picking your photos, but try to think outside of the box. A close-up of the inside of your computer could make for a great spaceship. And the carrot patch in your neighbour's front yard could make for an amazing alien forest."

11. BUILD A STRONG PHOTO LIBRARY

If you are planning on doing a lot of photobashing work, then it pays to build your own asset library. You need to ensure that they are free to use in the way that you want and also that you collect a variety of different shots. "Get a good library of photographs to use in your photobashing," agrees freelance illustrator Martin Nebelong (www.martinity.com). "Try to find high-resolution material; it'll make it much easier for you to select areas of a photo to use, to make automatic selections and it'll make your photobash look much more consistent if you avoid pixelated areas... You also need to make sure that you have photographs with lots of different lighting setups to choose from, so you have the right image for every project." If you find the perfect picture, with the wrong lighting, use your Photoshop skills to fix it.

12. MATCH COLOUR FOR CONSISTENCY

The Match Color command (found in Image > Adjustments) is cited as a great tool for quickly bringing together different photos and giving them a consistent colour to form the basis of your painting. "This tool is very helpful to do a very fast rough colour correction of your images to match them. In the end, this is all you need because you will overpaint them anyway. This key tool helps me to create a solid and fast basis for my painting," says Tony Andreas Rudolph.

Jakub Skop (www.artstation.com/artist/jakubskop) is also a big fan of the Match Color command in his photobash projects: "The most important step is choosing pictures with a similar texture and fitting them together in terms of colours. All discrepancy between the colours can be managed by using the Match Color option. Curves and Color Balance come in handy as well. One of my favourite elements are all kind of fogs and smoke, which adds a lot to the overall atmosphere and mystery, but most of all it adds a lot of depth and helps to divide the picture into a fore-, mid- and background. I put a lot of effort into creating a proper atmosphere in my works through colour choices. Proper colour balance and lighting makes the image look like one whole."





13. MAINTAIN A PAINTERLY FEEL

"[You] should always bear in mind that [photobashing] is a painting technique. The end result, whatever the level of realism aimed for, should ideally have a painted feel and not just that of a photomashing or pasted on. It is the means to an end, not the end itself," says Ricardo Guimaraes. He suggests starting with a composition that doesn't use photos, before moving on to adding stock. "Resorting to photos too early in the process will stiffen the whole painting and usually the end result will be way too much towards the photo-collage feel."

"Changes in Hue, Saturation and Contrast all come into play in order to perfectly integrate the different photos with the painting. Besides extensively using several different layer blending modes, among the most used tools are the adjustment layers, Channels, masks and filters, as well as clipping layers to layers below."



Texture overlay: This walkway is made using a tilable texture overlayed on a rectangular form as a Pattern (from Blending Options), then rasterized and transformed to match the perspective

Rock blending: The rocks are blended into the painting using Perspective Warp, the High Pass filter and the Overlay blending mode. Also it is masked, to fade out the edges of the photo

Smoke effect: The smoke effect is done using a photo of white smoke on a black background. By setting the layer blending mode to Screen only the light areas of the photo are shown

Blending options: This industrial plant element is merged with the painting by using the Blend If blending options, which makes certain ranges of your photo transparent

14. PHOTOGRAPH AND PAINT

Martin Nebelong (www.martinty.com) shares his advice to bring together photography and painting skills to create a photobash composition. "It's important that you have a clear idea about where you're going before you bring in any photos. If you don't, the photos will end up dictating the direction you're going in and you'll end up limiting your creativity. I always start by setting up the scene either as line art or as a speed-paint to make sure that I stick to my original idea."

"[You need] to have the photos match the form and perspective of the source painting. I use Free Transform and drag the handles of the transform box using a combination of Cmd/Ctrl, Alt/Option and Shift for perspective distortion, rotation and scaling. If that doesn't get me where I need to be, I use the Warp tool, which enables you to warp the photo more freely. This

is especially useful for textures and effects such as smoke or fire.

"Once you're happy with the result, it's time to blend the photo into the painting. This is done using layer styles, blending modes, masks or brushes. Adjustment layers such as Levels and Hue/Saturation are great for matching tone and colour between photos and painting. Again, consistency is key, so try to make sure there's no sudden tone, hue or saturation jumps between painting and photo elements."

"Remember not to go nuts with photo materials. Have calm areas in your painting, areas for the eye to rest upon. Break up the pacing of the painting and make sure not all areas are equal in terms of detail and contrast."



15. USE THE TRANSFORM TOOLSET

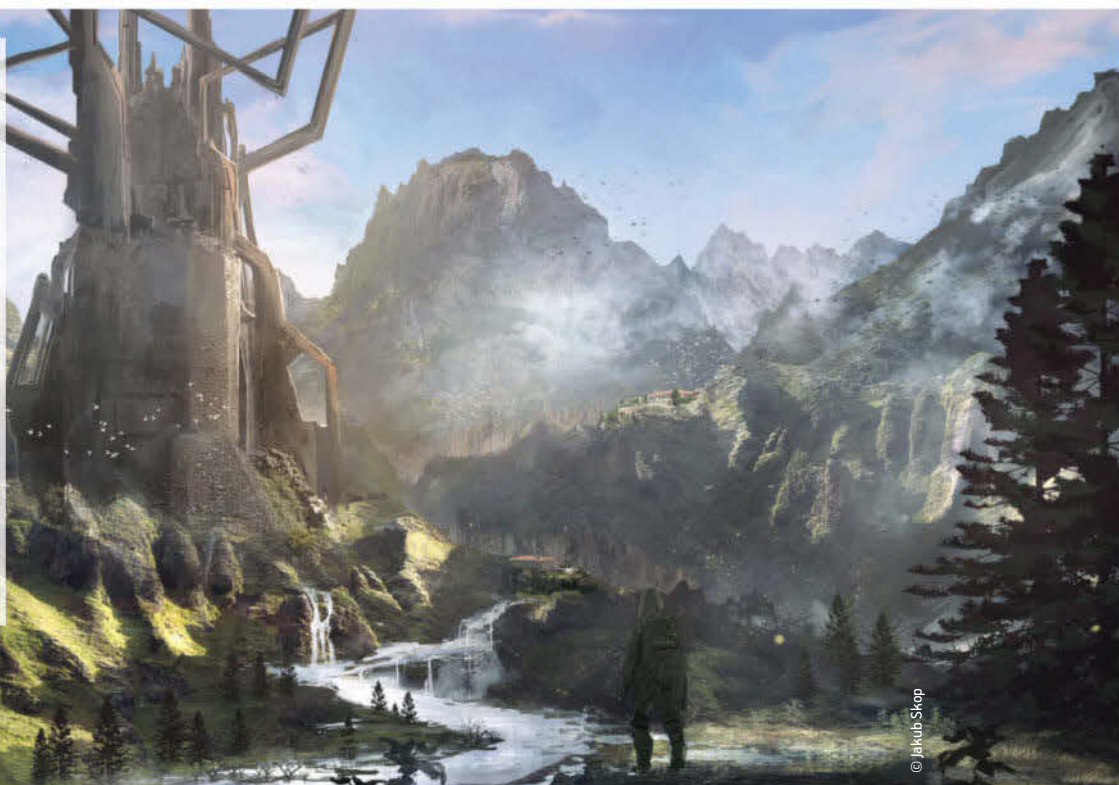
The Transform set of tools is essential for making the photos used work with the composition that has been created. Sebastian Hue says: "Cmd/Ctrl+T for the Transform tool is for sure the most used Photoshop tool, as far as I'm concerned, to transform my selections by resizing, extending, squashing and duplicating the cut elements."

"This transformation process is genius and so much fun. While you are playing with the toolset you can achieve very nice results by just squashing a motor, or warping a design into another. This is a very creative tool for me, not just a way to change scale or forms. For instance, the buildings in the Frozen Gold image (pictured) have been photobashed with some motor pieces that I squashed. It really gives the sci-fi look to those towers."

"Sometimes I just don't know where to go in terms of inspiration and so I just randomly take some stocks and transform them into other forms, I combine, duplicate and so on. This is a good remedy to avoid the blank page... It can nourish your creativity even more."

16. USE PHOTOSHOP'S BRUSH SELECTION

When it comes to building up a photobash image, the brushes in Photoshop are essential to help blend the photos into the painting and build up the painterly feel that we're looking to achieve. Freelance artist Jakub Skop starts with a quick sketch and adds the photos to it. "The next step involves using many different brushes, thanks to which the pictures gain a sense of originality. It's the most time consuming and interesting part of a new project, adding and creating details gives a lot of satisfaction. It's always a good idea to spend some time on the sky. The whole colour scheme of the artwork is dependent on that. It is responsible for the whole atmosphere and is a significant part when it comes to catching attention. For this, I mostly use normal brushes, Mixer brushes and also the Smudge tool."



© Jakub Skop

17. BUILD UP THE PAINTING

RICARDO GUIMARAES SHOWS US HOW HE OVERPAINTS HIS PHOTO COMPOSITIONS IN PHOTOSHOP



01 | ADD IMAGES TO THE BASE PLATE

This is what is called the base plate. On it I lay in several photos that will be the base for the painting and already establish some of the atmosphere. No part of the base plate remains untouched in the end, as I paint over practically everything.



02 | DO SOME BRUSHWORK

Here you can see how I adjusted the main rock formation, elongating and tilting it a bit. I also did some heavy brushwork on the foreground rock, ground, main rock, background, sky and planet. Light was also addressed, always striving to keep the overall mood I planned beforehand.



03 | FINISH THE IMAGE

I thought adding more planets would make a more-compelling image. I kept painting over everything to achieve a painterly look, yet still having the details the photos provided. I did more work on the sky and added a small astronaut on the foreground rock for better scale.

© Ricardo Guimaraes



18. MASTER ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

Thanks to their non-destructive application, many of our artists cite the adjustment layers in Photoshop as essential for photobash work, used to blend photography and digital painting into one final image. "It's tricky to narrow it down to just one tool in Photoshop that I would consider my key tool for photobashing, but I feel that the adjustment layer options comes pretty close," says Travis Wright. "A good artist can use almost any photo in a photobash by using the adjustment layers to change the lighting on certain elements, add shadows or match the colours to the surrounding environment. This is where having a decent grasp of basic art fundamentals comes into play a lot with photobashing. You still need to consider your light sources and overall colour mood that you want to capture with the image. Adjustment layers are an invaluable tool for bringing a piece together from what may originally seem like a bunch of unrelated photos."



19. COMPLETE YOUR PIECE

Martin Nebelong (www.martinity.com) talks us through the final stages of his photobash work: "When I'm nearing the end of a photobash, I often review the piece on my mobile using Pixl Preview. It mirrors what you're seeing in Photoshop. Seeing your painting in small size, and on a different screen, can often give you a clue about whether or not the values of your painting are working. The most successful photobashes can be read, even at thumbnail size."

"I also often make a new layer and merge all layers into it (Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+Shift+E). Then, I run the image through the Filter>Camera Raw Filter, which lets you tweak all different sorts of parameters that will help your finished painting look more consistent... If I need to draw extra attention to a certain part of the image, I use the Blur Gallery to give a depth-of-field effect. Sometimes I apply a very slight amount of noise to the image, which can also help bring the elements together."



Apply masks: Work with masks when you start adding your images to your concept. Don't use the Eraser tool to delete the stuff you don't like. This helps [if you want to] reuse your photos

20. RELIGHT SCENE ELEMENTS FAST WITH QUICK MASK

CONCEPT ARTIST TONY ANDREAS RUDOLPH ([WWW.ZULUSPLITTER.DE](http://www.zulusplitter.de)) TAKES US THROUGH THE BASIC PROCESS OF A PHOTOBASH, FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

Look for photos: Look for images that match your sketches or ideas. Don't be too picky. Randomness can sometimes be helpful to add ideas to your image

Overpaint the photos: Start painting your photobashed elements to customise them, fixing parts and integrating them into your concept. Just sticking images together doesn't make a cool result

Have an idea: First, you need to [decide] what kind of concept or image you want to create. Make a 3D sketch or black-and-white sketch to figure out perspective, light direction and the elements you want to have in your final image

Transform images: Transform the images by clicking Cmd/Ctrl+T and hold the Cmd button for the Free Transform tool. Don't stretch the image too heavily [so you] don't destroy your source image

Blend images together: Integrate the images with colour-grading techniques by using the Color Match tool or Curves. Make sure that you don't lose the material's effects in your colour-grading process

ALLISON ROAD

“Normally, when I produce artworks for my portfolio I try to make them look like an advertising concept: I want them to be self-explanatory, so my goal is achieved if you put a logo of a brand in the corner and it still makes sense”



FINITE ENERGY

JUAN MANUEL MOLLEVÍ

© Juan Manuel Molleví

DEDICATED TO A CAREER IN ADVERTISING, JUAN MANUEL MOLLEVÍ PRODUCED THIS PIECE WHILE TAKING HIS SECOND MASTERS AT THE FX ANIMATION BARCELONA 3D SCHOOL

Advertising professional Juan Manuel Molleví (www.mollevi.com) explains that, “Finite Energy was supposed to be a class exercise about a bulb exploding... But I hate being in the mainstream, this is why I came out with this idea. Normally, when I produce artworks for my portfolio I try to make them look like an advertising concept: I want them to be

self-explanatory, so my goal is achieved if you put a logo of a brand in the corner and [it] still makes sense. In this particular case, I wanted to represent the fragile state of the non-renewable energies.”

Molleví used Lightwave for the modelling, and Maxwell for the render, having learnt both packages on the Professional 3D for Graphic Design and Photography course at FX ANIMATION Barcelona 3D School (www.fxanimation.es). Of course, he was

already using Photoshop, and that came in for composition and final touches. “At the end, details are the most important thing,” he says.

Two main renders went into the final piece, with a third one “for the occlusion to enhance the shadows and increase the real sensation using the overlay fusion mode.” After that, Molleví “started to put [in] details [such] as sparkles, creating the sky and detailing the city.”

01 OUT OF LIGHTWAVE INTO PHOTOSHOP

This is the base of the artwork once all the render passes are merged with different kinds of fusion modes. At this point I merged a real photograph of a city that matches the luminosity of the bulb with the Multiply mode and the Normal mode, creating a more detailed version of the buildings.

**02 ON FIRE**

I used two different sets of brushes, one of smoke and the other of clouds. I positioned the main smoke stream and deformed it with the Transform tool to get the illusion of this sort of atmosphere escaping from its container. I used masks to re-create the lens effect and also added a real photograph of sparkles and fire.

**03 FINISHING TOUCHES**

I re-created more little pieces of broken glass and dust. Then I created a 50% Gray layer in the Overlay mode, and used the Dodge and Burn tools to make desired areas pop out. I created a merged layer on the top as well in the overlay fusion mode. Then I applied the High Pass filter.





COMBINE PHOTOS LIKE A PRO

LEARN THE ESSENTIALS OF COMPOSITING AN ILLUSTRATION FROM CONCEPT TO FINISHED PRODUCT

In this article we will focus on compositing different images together to create a vibrant and fun generic drink illustration full of energy. First do a little search to find as many image assets related to your project as possible. Having a large variety to choose from will help the compositing process go smoothly. We will also learn different Photoshop shortcuts and tricks that will help you bring your image to life. Photoshop has many more options that will

take your work to the next level, and learning the essentials from this tutorial will open your mind to those endless possibilities. Compositing is a skill that anyone can learn, but it requires patience and diligence to make beautiful, believable images. You will need to focus on making sure that masks and selections are precise, that lighting and shadows are properly placed and that colours bounce off each other in exactly the way they would in real life.

GET YOUR IDEAS DOWN

MAKE A SKETCH AND DECIDE ON THE COMPOSITION

01 CREATE A CONCEPT SKETCH

Draw a few quick thumbnails sketches to figure out different ways to express your idea. Keep thumbnail sketches small and you'll instantly be able to see whether a composition works or doesn't. You can sketch these on paper or in Photoshop, whichever is easier for you to refer to when you're making decisions about which one to progress with.



02 DECIDE ON THE COMPOSITION

Work on a few concepts for the composition layout. Figure out what elements might work and those that won't work. Start to think about the basic light source and where you want it to come from, so that later you have a guide to place shadows and highlights.



OUR EXPERT

ALEX LANIER
www.laniercreations.com
[@laniercreations](https://twitter.com/laniercreations)

A self-taught artist with a background in architecture, Alex Lanier is a freelance concept artist and illustrator best known for his creative innovation and attention to detail.



03 | CHOOSE PERFECT PICTURES



CONSISTENT LIGHTING

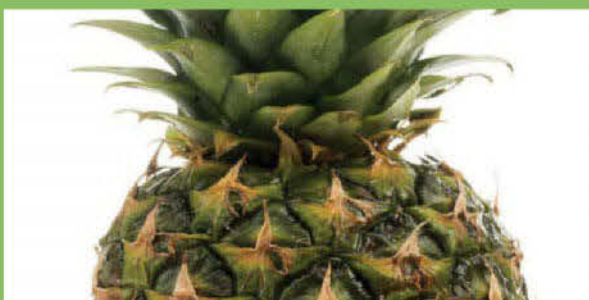
Look for images that have similar lighting to each other and similar lighting to the atmosphere in which

you are compositing. If you are taking your own photos, try to use the same lighting setup.



CONSISTENT COLOUR

Finding images with the same colour tones will save you some time during the colour correcting process. Try searching image banks for photos from the same set, as they'll have been shot at the same time and make this easier.



SHARPNESS

Look for images that are at a higher resolution. Sharper images will be easier to mask and composite. The higher quality of your work will also be noticed, as you'll be able to display it at a larger size and much higher resolution.



DEPTH OF FIELD

Look for images with the same focus, especially if they need to be on the same plane of your composite.



BACKGROUND

Try to find images with cleaner one-tone backgrounds. The masking process will be less of a headache and the quality of the mask will be better.



EXPRESSION

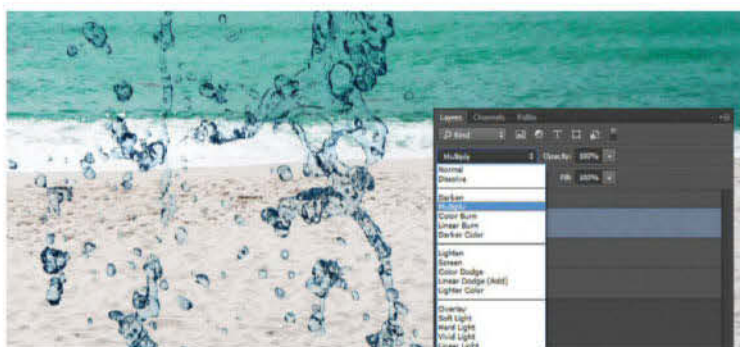
Choose image assets that fit the main concept of your work. If you are creating an image where people are happy and

dancing, make sure to find people that are smiling and staging your concept correctly.



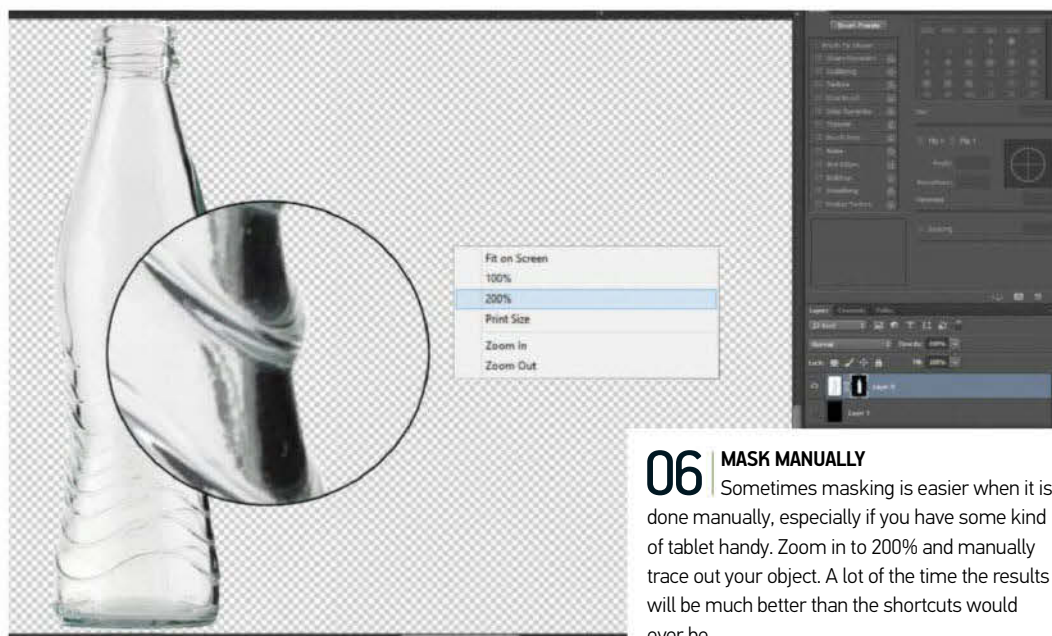
04 | START WITH SELECTION TOOLS

Masking using the Selection tools is one of the most common and useful ways to mask. This tool is most effective for masking when your image has a clear visual separation from the background in which you are masking. Different selection tools will be better for different kinds of images: the Pen tool is good for complex cut-outs, but simple shapes can make use of the Quick Selection tool.



05 | MASK THE WATER

Masking water can sometimes be a little tricky. Search for water images with a clean background to reduce any unwanted reflections. If you find water drips or splashes with clean white backgrounds, you can set those images to Multiply. This will hide all of the white highlights in your water giving the illusion of being masked.



06 | MASK MANUALLY

Sometimes masking is easier when it is done manually, especially if you have some kind of tablet handy. Zoom in to 200% and manually trace out your object. A lot of the time the results will be much better than the shortcuts would ever be.

QUICK CHEAT BLUR

Blurring can give the effect of more happening in the background and more action going on in the image.



07 | ESTABLISH YOUR FOCAL POINT OR POINTS

This step is like your anchor for the image. Once the focal point is figured out, then everything else should fall into place.



08 | DEFINE THE BASIC COMPOSITION

Refer back to your concept sketch and fill in the key points of your composition. In this step you might need to tweak a few things that worked in the concept sketch, but need adjustments in the composite.



09 | ADD SUPPORTING ELEMENTS

Fill in small details that help support the overall concept. Some areas might need to be filled in with supporting elements to complete the composition. In this case the water is tinted and warped around the bottle, with fruits added.

10 | CREATE PERSPECTIVE

SINGLE-POINT PERSPECTIVE

Single-point perspective only has one vanishing point on the horizon line. This perspective is good for images like a hallway or street that directly faces you.

TWO-POINT PERSPECTIVE

In two-point perspective, there are two points that an object's lines come from, and the sides of the object vanish to one of two vanishing points on the horizon line.

THREE-POINT PERSPECTIVE

In three-point perspective there is one stationary point and two vanishing points somewhere on the horizon, but unlike the two-point perspective, there is also a vanishing point above or below the horizon line that the vertical lines disappear to.

FOUR-POINT PERSPECTIVE

Four-point perspective can be used with either a horizontal or a vertical horizon line. It can show both a worm's-eye and bird's-eye view of a scene at the same time.



USE THE VANISHING POINT FILTER



SELECT THE IMAGE

The Vanishing Point filter allows you to bring content in your image into perspective. Select the layer you want to move into perspective. Press Cmd/Ctrl+C to copy that layer.



CREATE EDITING PLANE

Select the Filter button in the top menu. Scroll down to Vanishing Point tab in the pull down menu. You can also use the keyboard shortcut Alt/Opt+Cmd/Ctrl+V. Click the four corners of a perspective plane or object in the image to create an editing grid plane.

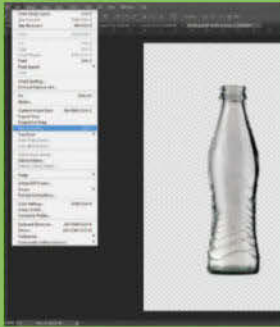


APPLY IMAGE

Apply your copied layer to the newly created perspective grid by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+V to paste the layer into perspective. Adjust the pasted image if needed and press OK.

11 | TRANSFORM PHOTO ELEMENTS

FREE TRANSFORM



LOCATE FREE TRANSFORM

Click the Edit button on the top menu bar. Scroll down and select Transform on the pull-down menu. You can also use the keyboard shortcut Cmd/Ctrl+T.



MAINTAIN ASPECT RATIO

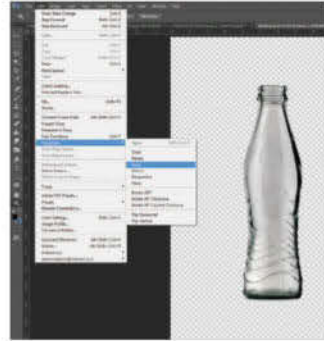
Transform your image while maintaining the current aspect ratio by dragging a corner and holding the Shift button.



FREE TRANSFORM

Transform your image's height and width by clicking and sliding the top, bottom, or sides of the Transform box.

SKEW



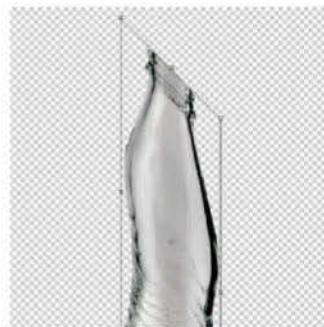
LOCATE SKEW OPTION

Click the Edit button on the top menu bar. Scroll down and select Transform on the pull down menu. Scroll over and select Skew on the second pull down menu.



SKEW LEFT OR RIGHT

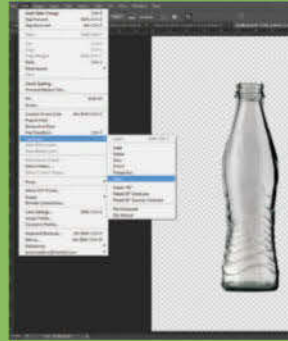
Click the top or bottom of the Skew Transform box and move left or right to skew in those directions.



SKEW UP OR DOWN

Click the left or right of the Skew Transform box and move up or down to skew in those directions.

WARP



LOCATE WARP OPTION

Click the Edit button on the top menu bar. Scroll down and select Transform on the pull-down menu. Scroll over and select Warp on the second pull-down menu.



INSIDE WARP

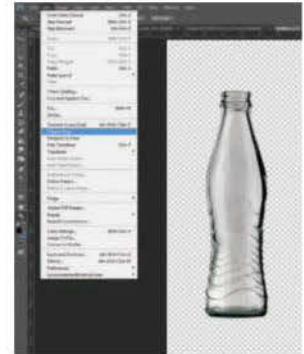
Select anywhere inside of the Warp Transform box and pull your selection in any direction in order to distort the inside of your image.



OUTSIDE WARP

Click and pull on any of the points located on the Warp Transform box to distort the outside of the image.

PUPPET WARP



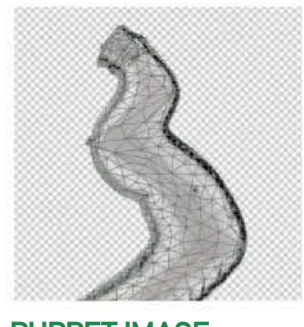
LOCATE PUPPET OPTION

Click the Edit button on the top menu bar. Scroll down and select Puppet Warp on the pull-down menu.



PICK POINTS

Select all of the points on the webbed grid that are on areas of your image you want to distort. Deselect a point by holding Alt while clicking the point.



PUPPET IMAGE

Click and drag any of your points to move around that area on your image. All other points will act as anchors except the one you move around.



12 TRANSFORM SHADOWS

Transform your shadows into perspective by using the Free Transform option. You can pull down shadows into any direction by grabbing a side or point and pulling in that direction.



13 WARP LIQUID

You can easily warp and distort liquid splashes in your image by using the Warp option. Push and pull the point until you reach a satisfactory position.



14 SCALE PEOPLE

Scale people in your image and maintain their aspect ratios by holding Shift as you drag the corners of the Transform box up and down.

15 USE OPACITY AND BLEND MODES



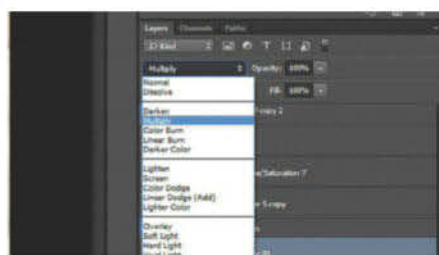
Bottle Transparency: Since the bottle has clear liquid inside, you should be able to slightly see through the liquid and bottle. To create this effect, the bottle is set to Multiply with 100% Opacity. Also if you have any objects in the liquid like ice or in this case fruit, you can play around with opacity to give the illusion of being inside the bottle.



Background Vs Foreground: Make the foreground objects pop, by slightly reducing the background's opacity with a white layer under the background and adding a Gaussian blur to the background. This will add more focus to the focal points of your image.

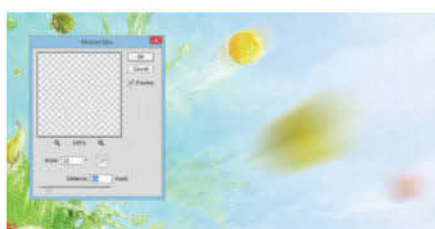


Liquid Transparency: The closer liquid splashes are at 80% Opacity level to give a little hint of blue from the sky. The splashes that are further away are at a 50% Opacity level to create depth between the two splash areas. A Motion Blur is also added to the foreground and background options leaving the middle ground sharp to create more depth.



16 USE MULTIPLY

The Multiply blending mode works great when dealing with translucent and transparent objects like water and glass.



17 MAKE MOVING OBJECTS

Add a little Motion Blur to create movement and energy in your image. Motion Blur can also create great separations between objects giving your image a less flat look.



18 BLUR BACKGROUND

The background is set to 7.1 on the Gaussian Blur effect. You can tweak this more or less depending on how far away objects in your background are from the main focus.

19 | APPLY LIGHTING

Blown out: Some areas are blown out with highlights to give the effect of hotspots. This will add more mood to your environments

Colour shadows: Sometimes you might have colour that needs to bleed into your shadows. In this case the green liquid needs to act as the bottle's shadow reflecting down. A green filter is painted on top of the shadow to give a more realistic and blended look

Small highlight and shadow details: Use a Soft Round brush to paint in small highlight and shadow details. This gives you more freedom to pick and choose where more reflective or dark areas are

QUICK CHEAT

BOKEH

Like the blur effect, Bokeh can give the effect of a lot going on in a background with a few simple steps.



DARK SHADOWS

Use dark shadows to cover up inconsistencies throughout your image.



RAIN

Rain can add more depth to your images by filling up empty spaces in the back and foreground.





20 | ADD PARTICLE DETAILS
Use a small Soft Round brush to paint in small light-coloured specks and add a little Motion Blur to create the effect of sand flying in the air.



21 | ADD GLOWS
Add the green glows that shine from the liquid and glass. The light source causes this effect, so make sure to have the glows in the right direction.



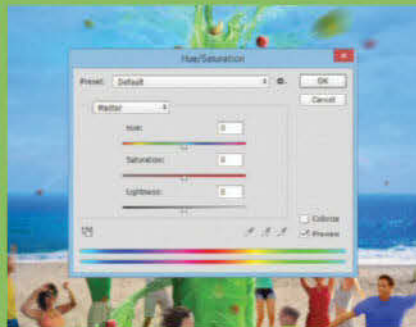
22 | CONDENSATION
Add some condensation to the bottle to illustrate the moisture released from the bottle being out in the sun.

23 | USE ADJUSTMENT LAYERS



LEVELS

Levels allows you to adjust the tonal range and colour by dragging the three sliders located in the middle of the tab. One of the sliders controls the dark tones, another the midtones and the last controls the highlights. Levels only allows you to adjust three points.



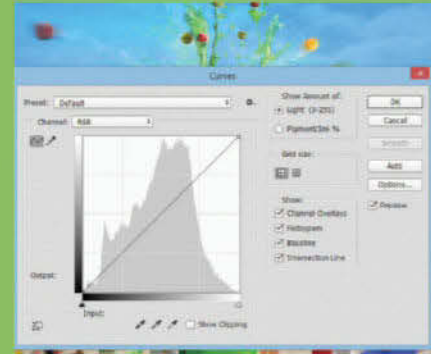
HUE/SATURATION

Hue/Saturation allows you to adjust the hue, saturation, and lightness of a specific range of colours in your image or simultaneously adjust all of the colours on your image.



PHOTO FILTER

The Photo Filter acts as a coloured lens on top of your image. You can adjust the intensity and desired colour. If you want a warm mood or cooler mood, this can be created with this filter.



CURVES

Curves allows you to adjust points throughout the tonal range of your image. You can adjust as many points as you want to affect the shadows, midtones and highlights of your image.



SELECTIVE COLOR

Selective Color allows you to modify the amount of a primary colour selection without messing with the other primary colours.



COLOR BALANCE

Color Balance allows you to change the overall mixture of colours in your image for specific colour corrections. This filter adds the tint of whatever colour you choose over the Shadows, Midtones and Highlights of your image.

24 | MAKE GLOBAL ADJUSTMENTS

QUICK CHEAT TEXTURE OVERLAY

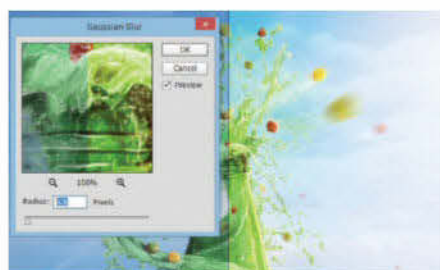
Texture overlays can add a lot of detail to flat surfaces that would probably take days to do if you had to do it all completely manually.



Vibrant colours: Make the colours pop by making sure the greens contrast just enough against the blue

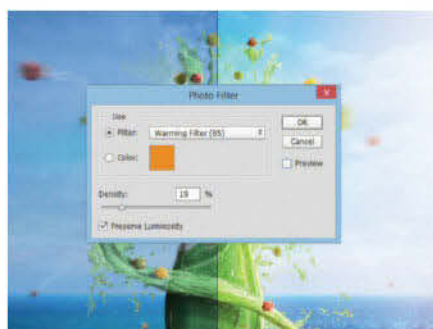
Clean up: Make sure there are not any unwanted stray marks or layers turned on

Shadow touch up: Touch up and darken shadows that may have been washed out by accident



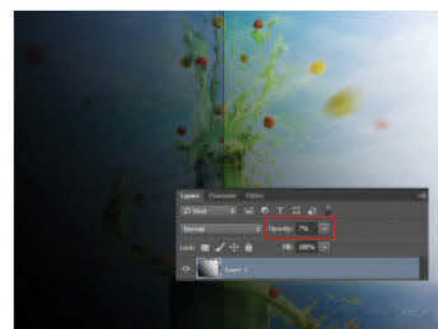
25 | SOFTEN THE IMAGE

The image should not have any sharp hard edges unless you purposefully create that. Flatten a copy of the image on top of every layer. Add a slight Gaussian Blur of 0.5. This will soften the image just enough to smooth out any sharp edges.



26 | ADD A WARM TONE

Add an overall warm beach tone to the image by adding a Photo Filter>Warming Filter B5 at 19% Density set to Preserve Luminosity.



27 | EXTRA DRAMA

Add a black to transparent gradient on top of the image and adjust the opacity to 7%. This will add the final touch of drama.





WHAT ONLY EXISTS IN THE MIND

JEFFREY SMITH

THIS PHOTOSHOP-ONLY DIGITAL PAINTING COMES FROM THE SYMMETRICAL MIND OF AMERICAN ARTIST JEFFREY SMITH

Jeffrey Smith – whose work rings with symmetry and symbolism – is a painter. His medium just happens to be Photoshop. *What Only Exists In The Mind* is “an interpretation of nostalgia, the painting depicting the scenery of where I grew up as a child,” says Smith (www.sonarfates.com). “The mountains, rivers, and the endless horizon. I wanted to paint this

because I often think of how beautiful and special that place is to me, and now as an adult I have moved.” He explains that he began the piece “with a sketch, line art just sketched into Photoshop. Underneath that sketch layer I began the mountain and the hills on the horizon, working towards the foreground with the river.” He used his own custom brushes, and relied heavily on the

Smudge tool. “I also used a reference shot I took of a lake for the overlay on the water, to give just the slight look of ripples,” he adds.

The success of the piece is largely down to its symmetry, and Smith says “many pieces of mine – past, present, and yet to be made... Have this same symmetrical style. My pieces are more symbols than anything, so symmetry is my default.”

“Many pieces of mine – past, present, and yet to be made... Have this same symmetrical style. My pieces are more symbols than anything, so symmetry is my default”



01 | FRONT TO BACK Midway through the painting, with the foreground in place, I flattened the piece and began painting the spiralling clouds. I used my own custom brushes for the entire piece.



02 | HEAD IN THE CLOUDS I started at the horizon, painting very small distant clouds and building up layer by layer with larger clouds. I do a lot of symmetrical work in this fashion.



03 | SURFACE DETAILS I begin to add surface details with the Pen and Gradient tools, which help to break up the blocky shapes. I’m a sucker for details so I probably go overboard with this step on most of my pieces.



04 | LAYERING UP

In this step I began painting the clouds on the top part of the canvas. Still, I made sure I was paying attention to the circular flow of the image.



05 | INTO THE VORTEX

Here I do the same thing as I did with the clouds on the horizon, lighten them as they get closer to the Sun. The clouds also get smaller, creating the illusion of the Sun being a vortex.



06 | ADDING SPARK

I wanted to create something quick, with a visual impact. Something with a spark. Now the piece is complete as far as painting, I had to add in details to give it a sense of movement.



07 | COLOURING IN

Here I used a yellow colour gradient over the painting set to Color Burn at 50% Opacity. I added hints of green to the hills and set it to Multiply at 50% Opacity, and an orange radial colour gradient in the middle of the Sun that's set to Color Dodge. My main focus was to get depth with the values, and keep the colours desaturated."



08 | FINISH AND FLATTEN

Finally I used Curves adjustments to bring out the deeper tones of the painting, exposing a higher contrast with the Sun. Then I flattened the piece and sharpened it with Smart Sharpen.

SMALL SCREEN

SMITH'S WORK QUESTIONS THE MODERN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SMARTPHONE

What Only Exists in the Mind is a standalone piece, that Smith painted "off the heels of a six-painting series, which explains why I wanted to do something quick." The *i* series "was a project I had been wanting to do for years," says

Smith, "and I knew it couldn't have been created accurately with just one painting. This was a six piece series that portrayed different scenarios of apathy through the use of present technology in phones."



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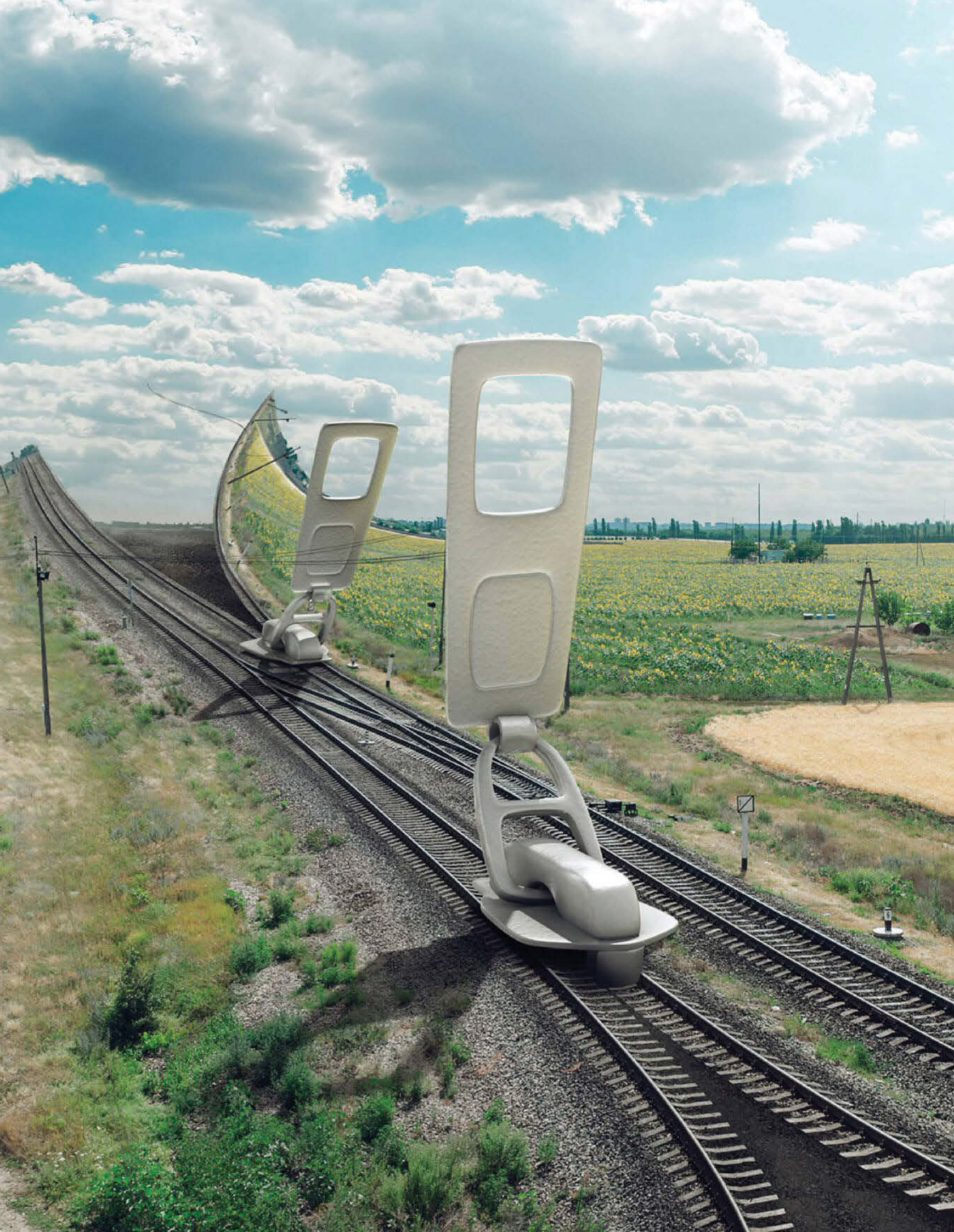
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USE WARP AND SELECTION TOOLS

EDIT AND COMBINE STOCK PHOTOS TO
MAKE A SURREAL SCENE

Photomanipulation is a great way to show other worlds, illustrate ideas, and detach people from reality.

In this tutorial we will show you how to create a completely new reality and try to help you learn how to see the world in different and unique ways.

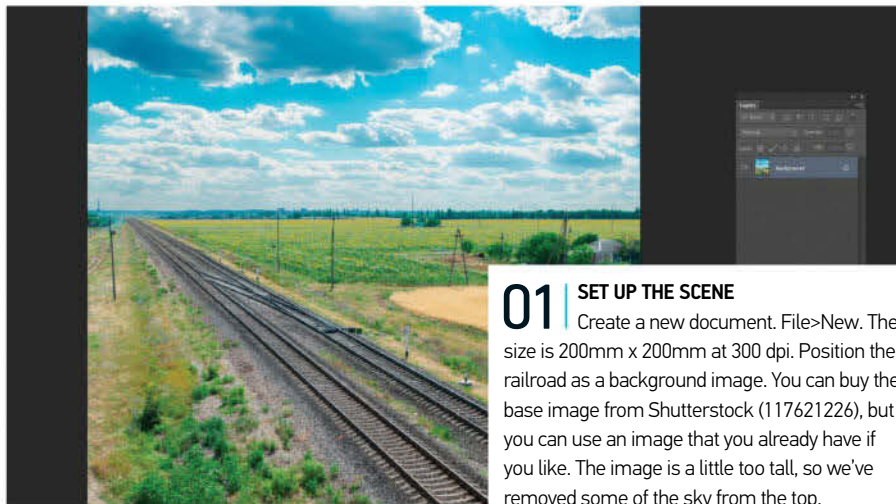
You can buy the base image from Shutterstock (117621226) or you can use another picture instead if you like. On FileSilo we have provided the 3D file (.obj) to make a new render based on your own photos, or

you can drop it into Photoshop (CS6 Extended or CC only) and use the .obj directly in the software. The zipper render was made by Martín De Pasquale, but you could use a stock image of a zipper instead.

The important thing is always to know how to solve, and not stagnate, and use new ways and solutions for each problem. In this case, it is important that the material always follows the same direction of light, intensity and perspective, in order to make the best and most accurate composite.

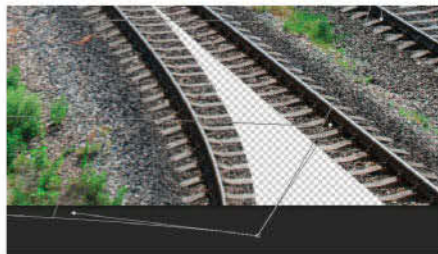
THE BASICS

CREATE THE ZIPPER EFFECT ON THE TRACKS



01 SET UP THE SCENE

Create a new document. File>New. The size is 200mm x 200mm at 300 dpi. Position the railroad as a background image. You can buy the base image from Shutterstock (117621226), but you can use an image that you already have if you like. The image is a little too tall, so we've removed some of the sky from the top.



02 SPLIT THE TRACK

Make a selection with the Polygonal Lasso tool (L) from the bottom-centre of the track to the left, and copy to a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+C>Cmd/Ctrl+V). Now you have the left part of the rail and terrain. Do the same with the right side. Both sides have two new layers, with each side of the track, divided exactly in the centre. Now we need to create the distorting effect with the Warp tool.



03 WORK WITH THE WARP TOOL

Cmd/Ctrl+T on the layer, and the option to Transform will appear. At the top, there is a button to switch from Free mode to Warp. A grid now distorts the image and gives the form we need, using the white squares around the selection.



OUR EXPERT

MARTÍN DE PASQUALE
www.martindepasquale.com

Martin De Pasquale is 26 years old and comes from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Working as a photographer, art director and designer, he has his own studio in the city. He says that, "I always try to find new ideas, new ways of working to achieve interesting results."

SOURCE FILES

Head to www.filesilo.co.uk/advancedphotoshop to access Zipper Render (JPG), textures, and a .obj file to make new renders for the composition.

WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM SKETCH TO FINISHED ARTWORK



Progress 1: Base image



Progress 2: Make the zipper effect



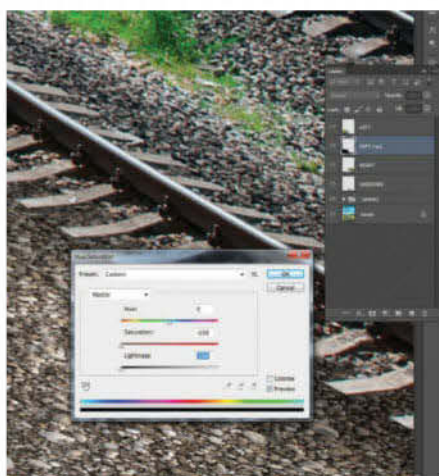
Progress 3: Add details



04 | ADD GRAVEL UNDER THE RAIL
Add gravel.jpg into the composition. Click Cmd/Ctrl+T to transform and skew the texture in order to make it follow the same perspective as the background. Then press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate and complete the area.

■ QUICK TIP: SMOOTH SELECTIONS

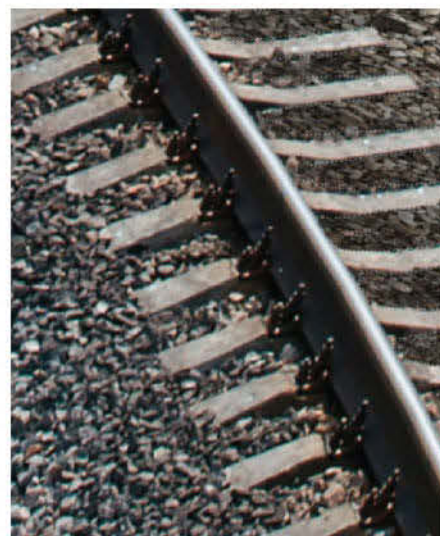
In large files (300dpi), when you make a selection we recommend smoothing a little bit before cutting (Select>Modify>Feather, set to 1 pixel). With this little trick, you'll avoid the aliased effect in the edges when it is deleted.



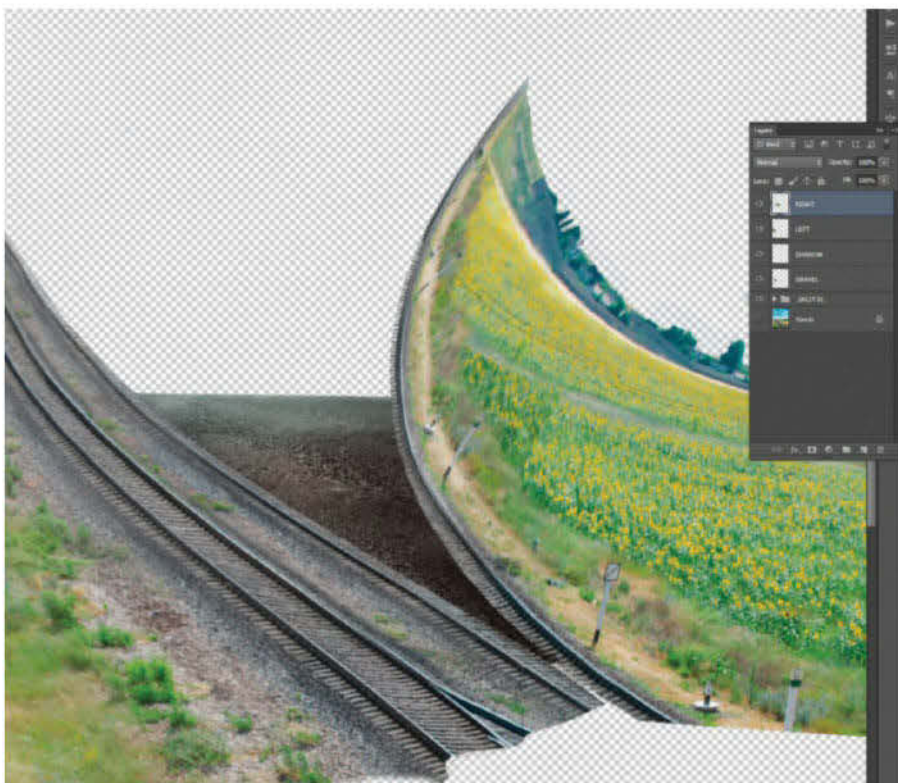
07 | RE-DEFINE THE SHADOWS
Duplicate the left rail layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J) and move under the original. Now move the content under, as a shadow. Open Hue/Saturation (Cmd/Ctrl+U) and set to: Saturation -100, Lightness -100 to make it black. Add a slight blur (Cmd/Ctrl+F). In this case, we chose an 8px radius and set the layer to Multiply. Adjust the opacity of the layer as you need.



05 | INSERT SOME SHADOWS
Select the gravel layers and press Cmd/Ctrl+G to group layers. Then move under the initial cut rail layers. In between, create a new layer (Ctrl+Shift+N). Then, you can use the method you prefer. In this case, with the Brush tool, we painted with 50% grey colour and multiplied the layer.



06 | ADD MORE DETAILS
With this step, you can add more details. For example, select the gravel between the rails, and delete. With this, you will make the texture look better. There are many ways to select, but for this process, the Polygonal Lasso tool works great. Once you have made the selection, just delete.



08 | DUPLICATE THE EFFECT
Now we need to make the same effect at the back. Again, make the selection of each side of the trail, duplicate and make the gravel texture, and shadows. If you want, you can add buildings or mountains in the background. If you

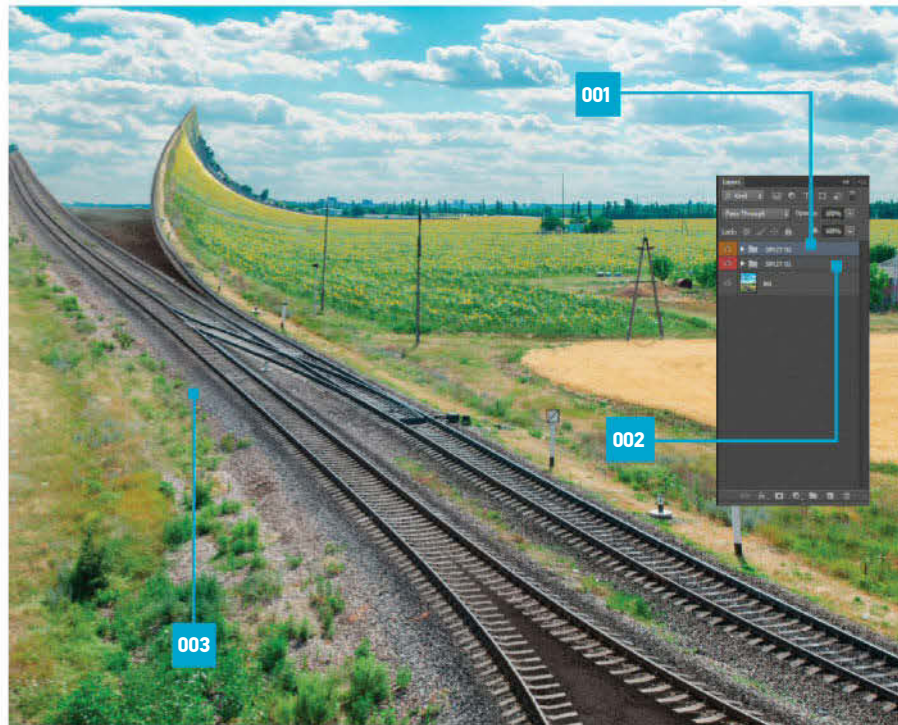
have a train to erase just copy a part of the railway that is empty, then duplicate in a new layer, and use it as a patch to remove the train. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to transform this patch and fit it in place.

■ ADD THE ZIPPER

USE THE RENDERED IMAGES, OR ADD THE .OBJ DIRECTLY IN PHOTOSHOP

09 | ORGANISE AND GROUP LAYERS

Keeping order is very important during the work process, and more so in Photoshop. At this point we need to arrange the composition. It works best to group layers, and give them names and colours to identify them easily later on. Since Photoshop CS6, a search engine for layers has been provided. Therefore, it is very important that they have a name and the colour to identify them quickly. You never know when you will want to make adjustments or need to modify some of the work you have done or if another person will need to use your file. By having the whole process completely organised and in order, you'll save a lot of time.



001 | COLOUR CODING

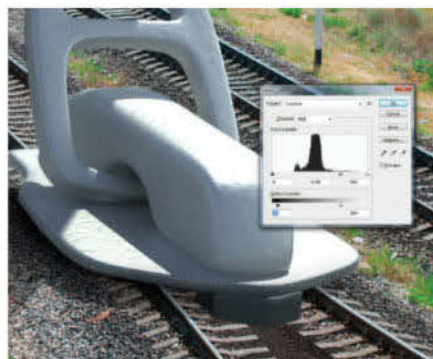
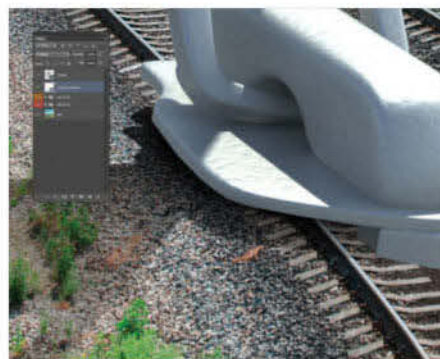
As you can see, the colours are very useful to quickly identify the material in the composition

002 | GROUP EVERYTHING

Creating groups is a good way to keep layers (preventing you from dropping them into a single layer)

003 | ORGANISE YOUR SCREEN

It is important to organise the software labels too. Avoid having too many tools open, and check the entire piece regularly.



11 | ADD THE SHADOWS

Add the zipper shadow, (using the zipper_shadow.jpg image on FileSilo) under the zipper. Set to the Multiply blend mode, it will remove the white, so that only shadows remain. Now we have the base of the zipper ready for work in detail. It is always necessary to scale, rotate and adjust to match the shadows. We recommend that you separate the two shadows in the file, to work on them separately.

12 | DARKEN AREAS

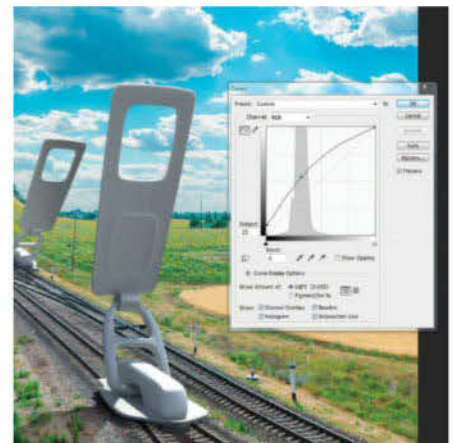
To balance the image of the zipper with the original picture, we need to slightly obscure the bottom. To do that, press Q to make a Quick Mask, and, using a blurred brush, paint the parts that we want to make darker. When you are satisfied, press Q to turn it into a selection, then press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert the selection, and Cmd/Ctrl+L to adjust the Levels.



10 | ADD THE ZIPPER IMAGE

Add the zipper image to the composition (zipper.png on FileSilo) and rotate or scale to locate it in the right place. Once located, press Enter to confirm and convert to a Smart Object automatically. You can rasterize the layer, because it remains unchanged, or leave as a Smart Object.

“You never know when you will want to make adjustments or need to modify some of the work you have done”



13 | GENERAL ADJUSTMENTS

The colour and contrast on the zipper are fine, but when added to the scene, halftones are very dark in the higher area. To adjust, go to the zipper layer, press Cmd/Ctrl+L, and adjust the sliders to clarify and adjust the contrast. There are other ways to adjust it depending on the way you work. Another option would be to use Curves (Cmd/Ctrl+M), adjusting the middle of the Curve so the contrast changes.

ADD FINAL TOUCHES

COMPLETE THE IMAGE WITH EXTRA DETAILS AND COLOUR ADJUSTMENTS



14 ADD UTILITY POLES

The distortion of the railway affects everything around it, including utility poles. These posts should be straight, but are now curved. To recover them, look for new elements on free resource websites, or take them from the original image. In this case, we recovered the larger utility poles in front, and duplicated them around the railway, rotating or scaling if necessary. You can also make a Smart Object (Cmd/right-click on layer and choose Convert to Smart Object) so you don't lose quality when the image is scaled.

■ QUICK TIP: ANALYSE FROM AFAR

Do not just work with the composition close-up. Sit back and analyse it from afar, study it from all sides in order to observe what happens with the composition throughout the whole work process. It will help you to identify and correct any problems.



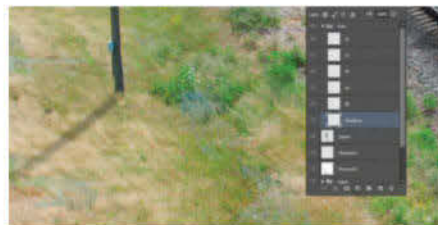
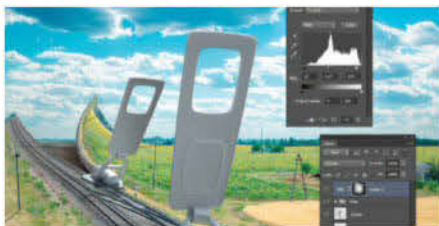
■ USE PHOTOSHOP'S 3D OPTIONS

Photoshop has included 3D functionality in the Extended version of CS6 and in CC. It gives us the possibility to bring a model directly into Photoshop and render without leaving the program. In this case, if you want to use a different angle on the zipper, one that works best with your start photo, you can drag zipper.obj (on FileSilo) into the composition, and work on it. You can even adjust the lighting to suit your composition.



15 ADD CABLES

Create a new group called 'Cable'. On a new layer inside, draw a few lines between the posts using a mouse or graphics tablet. At this stage, add all kinds of details that will help us reach as much realism as possible. In this case that could be damaged wires on background poles, dust, particles, and similar details.



16 ADD UTILITY POLE SHADOWS

To make the shadows of utility poles, create a new layer inside the group. Again, with the Brush tool, draw a shadow and set the layer to Multiply. You must respect the same direction, intensity and colour of the other shadows. For that, analyse the entire composition, and search for references in the same picture. The part of the shadow that is farthest from the object is usually lighter than the one close to the object, so check if you have made the shadow properly and if you need to make it slightly lighter and less intense. It's important to make shadows look realistic.

17 MAKE COLOUR ADJUSTMENTS

Create a tonal difference in the centre of the image. Make a Levels adjustment layer on the top, and apply a soft mask around the zipper and the rails. Use it to slightly increase the contrast. Create another Levels adjustment layer and use it to increase the light levels. All these adjustments should be minimal.

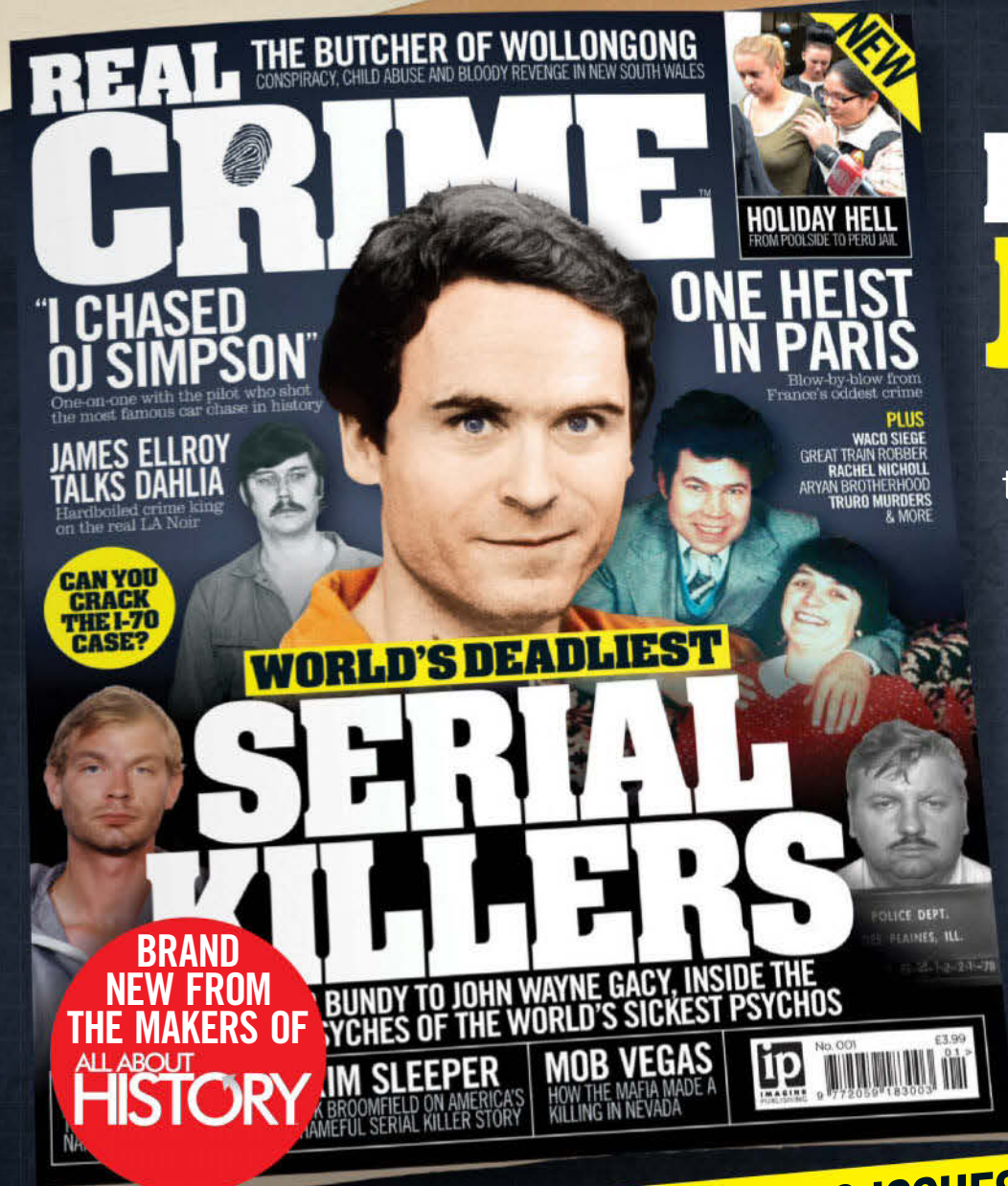


18 FINISHING TOUCHES

Finally, create an adjustments group. Keep it right at the top. Add a Color Balance layer, select Shadows then pull the slider to -7 Cyan / +6 Blue. Create a Hue/Saturation layer and decrease the

Saturation slightly (-20). Now, create a Photo Filter layer, with Warming Light and Density at 15%. Play with Levels, Vibrance, Brightness and Contrast, until you find a look you are happy with.

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CREATE SHINING SKIN EFFECTS

AUGMENT A MODEL WITH A METALLIC SHEEN USING FILTERS, ADJUSTMENTS, AND NON-DESTRUCTIVE DODGING AND BURNING

Altering skin is a great way to give your portraits an interesting and eye-catching twist. Learn how to ensheath the starting model in fresh and futuristic metallic lustre.

Filters, blend modes, and adjustments will be key to creating the effect. The Median filter will be employed to smooth the model's skin, sweeping away minor details and paving the way for a statue-like look. Some dodging and burning will follow to boost highlights and shadows. To stay non-destructive, you'll be painting black and white on 50% gray layers set to Overlay instead of using the traditional Dodge and Burn tools.

For a liquid metal look, the Plastic Wrap and Chrome filters will be utilised. To make the effect more convincing, follow with the Displace filter. You'll merge layers and save the snapshot as a new grayscale PSD. A bit of Gaussian Blur will reduce abrupt transitions. After saving the map, you'll return to the main document and apply the Displace filter. Referencing the displacement map created will help mould the textures more snugly into the contours of the model.

To finalise the piece, you'll run it through a battery of adjustment layers and several applications of the Camera Raw filter.

PREPARE THE MODEL

GET THE MODEL READY FOR A METALLIC MAKEOVER

01 SITUATE THE MODEL

Open Start.psd from the FileSilo. Go to File>Place Embedded and grab Model.psd. Confirm the place by clicking the check mark in the options bar or hitting Return/Enter. Press the Add Layer Mask button at the bottom of the Layers palette. With the Brush tool and a soft-edged brush at 80% Opacity paint black in the mask to fade the sides.



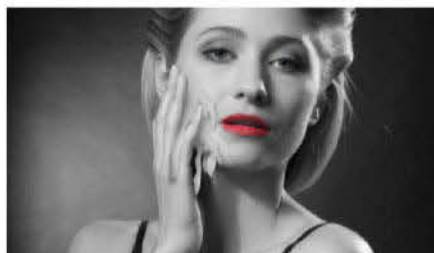
02 CREATE MELTING SHAPES

With the Pen tool set to Shape, create and stack some melting shapes using white and #d5b5b3. In the Styles palette, click on the palette menu and choose Load Styles. Grab Melt.asl. Use the two styles on the melting shapes. Lower the Opacity of some of the upper shapes to 40-60%.



03 DESATURATE AND MERGE

Click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette and choose Hue/Saturation. Drop Saturation to -100. Paint black in the mask to remove from the eyes, lips, and in a few areas here and there. Merge the layers by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Option+Shift+E. You'll be using this more throughout the tutorial, so get comfortable with that key combination.



OUR EXPERT

ANDRE VILLANUEVA
www.000-000-0000.com

Originally from the Philippines, Andre now resides with his family in Alabama, USA. He discovered Photoshop while in school and it has gradually overtaken his life.

SOURCE FILES

On FileSilo (www.filesilo.co.uk/advancedphotoshop) there is a starting model and textures for you to use when following along with the tutorial.

WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM SKIN TO SHIMMERING METAL



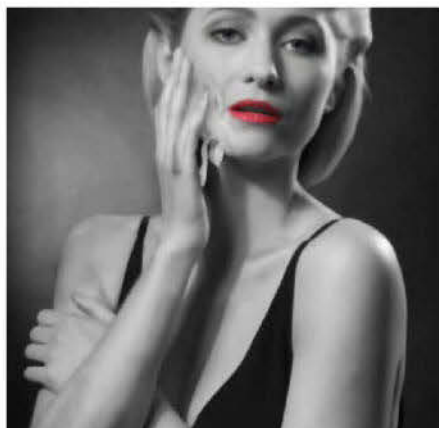
Progress 1: Polish the model



Progress 2: Apply Plastic Wrap, Chrome, and Displace filters

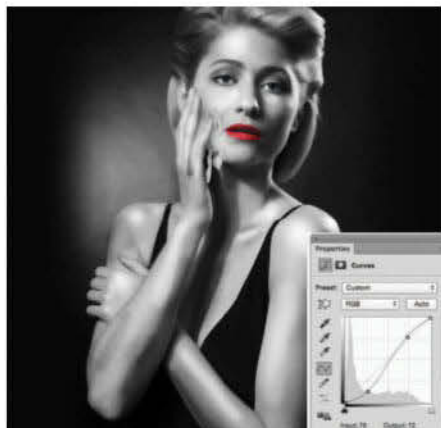


Progress 3: Process with adjustments



04 SMOOTH AND BURN

Right-click on the merged layer, choose Convert to Smart Object. Go to Filter>Noise>Median. Set Radius to 10px then click OK. Add a layer mask. Paint black in the mask to reduce smoothing on the eyes, lips, fingers, and a bit from the nose and melting shapes. Create a new layer. Go to Edit>Fill (or Shift+F5), choose 50% gray. Click OK. Set the layer to the Overlay blend mode with the drop-down at the top of the Layers palette. Paint black at 10% brush Opacity to start burning.



05 DODGE AND BURN

Continue to burn, increasing opacity as needed. Create a new 50% gray layer and set to the Overlay blend mode. Now use white to dodge. By segregating the dodge and burn layers, you have more control. If you need to intensify, duplicate the layer. Finesse by lowering the opacity or intensify further by duplicating again. Click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette and choose Curves. Plot two points and adjust to make a slight S curve, pushing the contrast.



06 APPLY PLASTIC WRAP FILTER

We'll now start the process of creating a liquid metal look. Merge layers again by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Option+Shift+E. Right-click on the layer, choose Convert to Smart Object. Go to Filter>Artistic>Plastic Wrap. Set Highlight Strength to 5, Detail to 5, and max out Smoothness to 15. Click OK. Add a layer mask. Paint black at 40-60% Opacity to reduce a bit on the fingers touching the face, as well as some of the outlining on her body.



07 CREATE DISPLACEMENT MAP

Now you'll create the displacement map, a requisite for the Displace filter. This filter's handy to know for a project such as this where you need to overlay texture convincingly onto an object or character. Merge layers. Select all (Cmd/Ctrl+A), then copy (Cmd/Ctrl+C). Open a new document, then paste (Cmd/Ctrl+V). Because a displacement map doesn't look at colour, you can go to Image>Mode>Grayscale, even if there's not much colour. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur, set Radius to 1.5px. Save as 'Map.psd'.

■ QUICK TIP: TONE DOWN DODGE AND BURN

You painted black and white on 50% gray layers set to Overlay for some non-destructive dodging and burning. Need to tone things down? Try setting to Soft Light instead. If you need to reduce further, lower the layer opacity and/or paint back lightly with the 50% gray colour (#808080).



08 APPLY CHROME FILTER

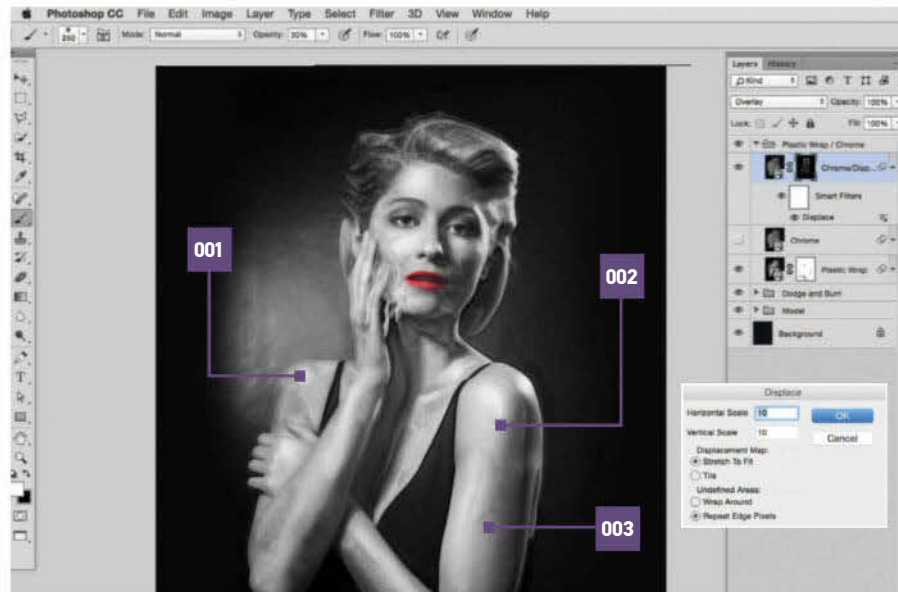
Return to the main document. Press Cmd/Ctrl+D to deselect. Right-click on the merged layer we copied to create the basis for the displacement map, choose Convert to Smart Object. Press D for default colours. Go to Filter>Sketch>Chrome. Set Detail to 0 and max out Smoothness to 10. Click OK. Merge layers again. Right-click and choose Convert to Smart Object. Turn off the visibility of the first Chrome layer. We'll now apply the displacement map to help mould the chrome effect to the contours of the model.

PROCESS THE MODEL

CONTINUE THE METALLIC METAMORPHOSIS

09 | USE A DISPLACEMENT MAP

Go to Filter>Distort>Displace. Keep both the Horizontal and Vertical Scale at 10 then click OK. Choose Map.psd and click Open. Set to Overlay blend mode. The effect is obviously too much at this point, so let's selectively paint it in. Now, Alt/Option+click the Add Layer Mask button. Carefully paint back with white at 20-30% brush Opacity to apply the effect strategically.



001 | PLASTIC WRAP AND CHROME FILTERS

The Plastic Wrap and Chrome filters create a liquid metal look. Layer masks allow you to paint black to reduce it

002 | DISPLACE FILTER

The Displace filter, which references the displacement map you created, helps the metallic effect flow along the model's contours

003 | ADJUSTMENTS

Now that the core effect's complete, you'll continue with a series of adjustments and filters (including the powerful Camera Raw)



11 | APPLY COLOR LOOKUP

Click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, choose Color Lookup. Pick the Candlelight 3DLUT File. Drop Opacity to 50%. Invert the mask with Cmd/Ctrl+I, then paint lightly back with white to add warm humanity back to her skin. Don't overdo it, just paint touches here and there. Add another Color Lookup layer; you should pick Crisp_Winter this time and drop to 50% Opacity. Invert the mask (Cmd/Ctrl+I) and paint back with white to add some cool colouring.

12 | APPLY MORE COLOR LOOKUP AND TEXTURE

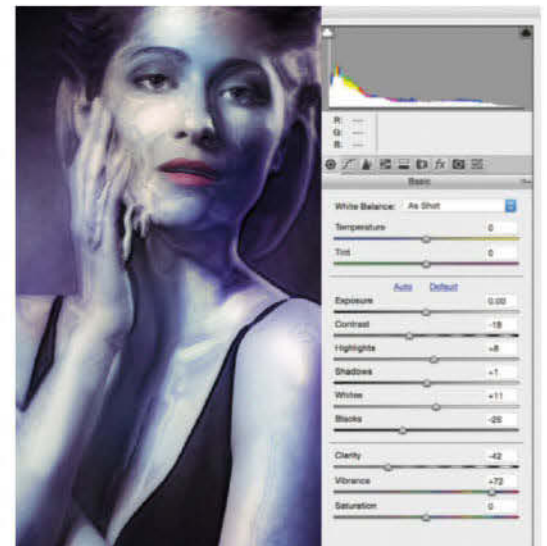
Let's continue with another Color Lookup adjustment layer. Pick LateSunset. Drop Opacity to 50%. Invert the mask and paint back with white to add some warm colouring. Create another Color Lookup layer and pick LateSunset again. Set to the Pin Light blend mode. Drop Opacity to 40%. Now, place Spin.jpg and confirm with Return/Enter. Set to the Overlay blend mode and drop Opacity to 60%. Add a layer mask and paint black at 60% Opacity to reduce on the model.



10 | ADD TEXTURE AND DESATURATE

Go to File>Place Embedded, grab Texture1.jpg. Set to the Pin Light blend mode and drop Opacity to 20%. Alt/Option+click the Add Layer Mask button in the Layers palette. Paint white at 50% Opacity to add lightly. Place Texture2.jpg. Set to the Overlay blend mode and 40% Opacity. Alt/Option+click the Add Layer Mask button. Paint white to add throughout. Click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette and choose Hue/Saturation. Drop Saturation to -100. Paint black to restore colour in the lips and eyes.

For a liquid metal look, use a combination of the Plastic Wrap and Chrome filters



13 | APPLY CAMERA RAW FILTER

Let's now use the powerful and flexible Camera Raw filter to continue forging the look. Merge layers again with Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Option+Shift+E. Convert to a Smart Object. Go to Filter>Camera Raw Filter. Under Basic, set Contrast to -18, Highlights to +8, Shadows to +1, Whites to +11, Blacks to -26, Clarity to -42, and Vibrance to +72. Click OK. We'll march on with another Camera Raw filter application. Merge layers again and convert to a Smart Object.

FINALISE THE PIECE

PERFORM FINAL ADJUSTMENTS AND TOUCH-UPS



14 APPLY MORE CAMERA RAW

Go to Filter>Camera Raw Filter. This time, just increase Clarity to 100%. Click OK. Add a layer mask. Paint black in the mask to soften up areas via reduction of clarity. Merge layers again and convert to a Smart Object. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Set Radius to 5.1. Click OK. Set to the Lighten blend mode and drop Opacity to 60%. This gives a nice soft glow. Add a layer mask and paint black at 50% Opacity to reduce in areas.

QUICK TIP: LAST-MINUTE FIXES

Upon completion of the project, you may have a nagging urge to tweak or nudge something slightly. Instead of backtracking, merge layers and convert to a Smart Object. Go to Filter>Liquify and make your gooey edits. Because Liquify is now applied as a Smart Filter, you can continually refine until you are completely happy with it.



17 PERFORM FINAL TOUCH-UPS

If you'd like to boost shadows and highlights before the final Camera Raw application, create a layer or two of 50% gray. Again, paint black to burn and white to dodge. Start with low brush opacities and work your way up. When done, place Texture3.jpg. Set to the Overlay blend mode and drop Opacity to 80%. Go to Filter>Distort>Displace, click OK, then select the map we saved earlier. Alt/Option+click the Add Layer Mask button, then paint back with white at 60% Opacity to apply.



15 APPLY COLOR LOOKUP

Now you'll continue finalising the image's look, starting with three more Color Lookup adjustments. Click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, choose Color Lookup. Pick Candlelight. Add another Color Lookup adjustment layer and pick FuturisticBleak. Add a final Color Lookup and use Candlelight again. Set to the Overlay blend mode and drop Opacity to 50%. Invert the mask. Paint white at 30% Opacity to deepen the candlelit, bronzed look in a few strategic spots.

16 APPLY COLOR BALANCE

Click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, choose Color Balance. Set Midtones to (from top to bottom) -29, -15, +26. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the Color Balance adjustment layer with the same settings. Invert the mask. Paint with white to increase the effect in areas. Create another Color Balance adjustment layer. Set Midtones to (from top to bottom) 0, -21, -100. Set to Difference blend mode. Invert the mask, paint with white at 40-60% Opacity to darken.



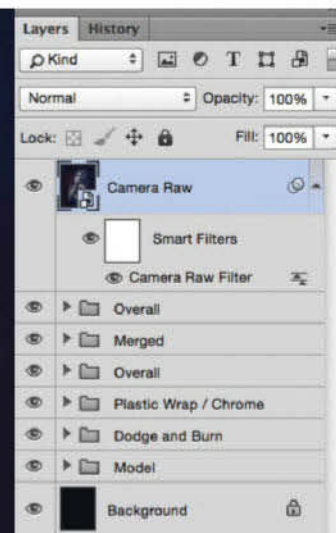
18 APPLY CAMERA RAW

Merge layers again so we can apply one last Camera Raw filter to lock down the look we're going for. Go to Filter>Camera Raw Filter. Under Basic, reduce Contrast to -40. Increase both Shadows and Clarity to +30. Under Detail, increase



TAKE IT FURTHER

After completing the tutorial, take it even further by transplanting the metallic model over a new background. Merge layers. Use the Pen tool (set to Path) to trace a path around the model. When you have done that, press Cmd/Ctrl+Enter to convert to a selection. Apply a bit of feathering (Select>Modify>Feather) to keep the selection from looking too scissor-cut, then add a layer mask with the button in the Layers palette. Drag into a new document or introduce new layers below to build up the background. Above the model, you can add further adjustments to make everything mesh.

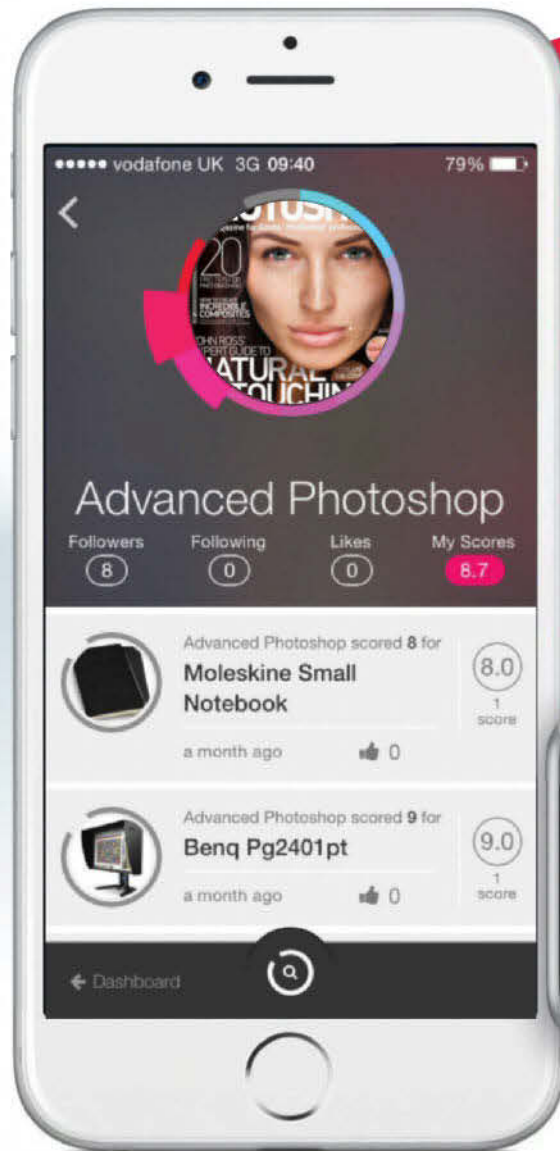


Sharpening Amount to 70, and set Luminance to 10 (which will set Luminance Detail to 50). Click OK. The metallic look's now complete. If you want to take this project even further, continue with the boxout steps.

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© Juan Manuel Mollevi

“I love to draw clouds and colourful skies. I did all the flat colours and little by little added details, being careful of contrasts, light, shadow, shapes”



FINDING THAT PLACE

DANIEL BOGNI

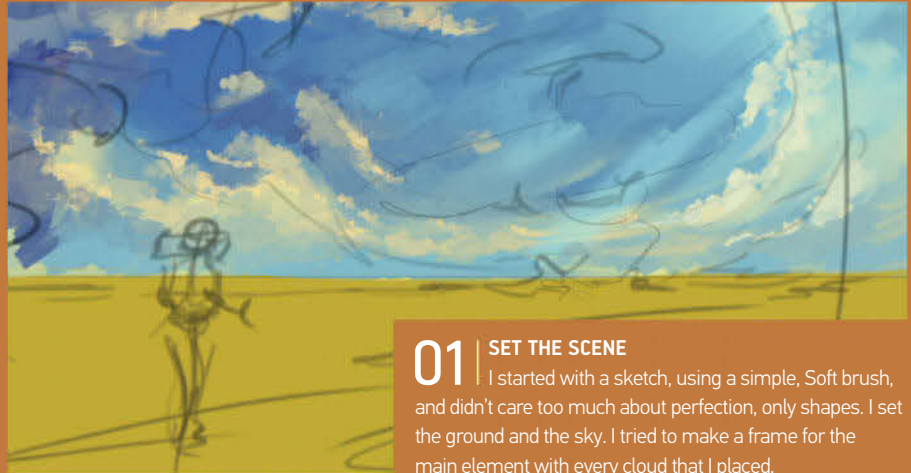
SIMPLICITY OF PROCESS AND PEACE OF MIND ARE BEHIND THIS BEAUTIFUL AND COLOURFUL PAINTING FROM THIS TALENTED BRAZILIAN ILLUSTRATOR DANIEL BOGNI

Brazilian illustrator Daniel Bogni (www.danielbogni.com) believes in telling stories with his work. He approaches his art with the vision that it will mean different things to different people. “I personally think this is very cool, mainly because what I try to express is interpreted differently depending on the person who is seeing the art and his emotional

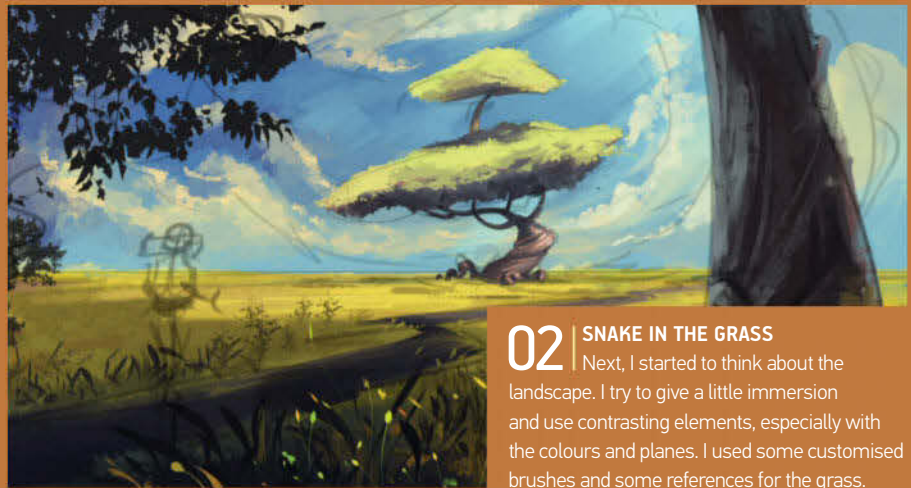
state,” he says. In the case of *Finding That Place* he was inspired by a friend who likes hiking, and says he wanted to convey “a sense of freedom, adventure and at the same time bring some peace.”

And to do that, the 26-year-old employed a fairly simple process. He always starts with a simple sketch – “the simplest possible actually” – and uses the same core Photoshop tools: the

brushes, Color Dodge, Multiply, Levels and Color Balance. In this image, he started with the sky and the clouds: “I love to draw clouds and colourful skies. I did all the flat colours and little by little added details, being careful of contrasts, light, shadow, shapes.” Later on he’ll usually “flip the image, zoom out to look from afar. It is a process that I especially love. But sometimes it’s really slow,” he adds.



01 | **SET THE SCENE**
I started with a sketch, using a simple, Soft brush, and didn't care too much about perfection, only shapes. I set the ground and the sky. I tried to make a frame for the main element with every cloud that I placed.



02 | **SNAKE IN THE GRASS**
Next, I started to think about the landscape. I try to give a little immersion and use contrasting elements, especially with the colours and planes. I used some customised brushes and some references for the grass.



03 | **DEVIL IN THE DETAILS**
Then I focused on character. I used the Pen tool to define the silhouette and a Hard brush to give the details. Next I used a Soft Round brush to give more details, before opening PaintStorm to use some oil brushes.

WACOM CINTIQ 27QHD

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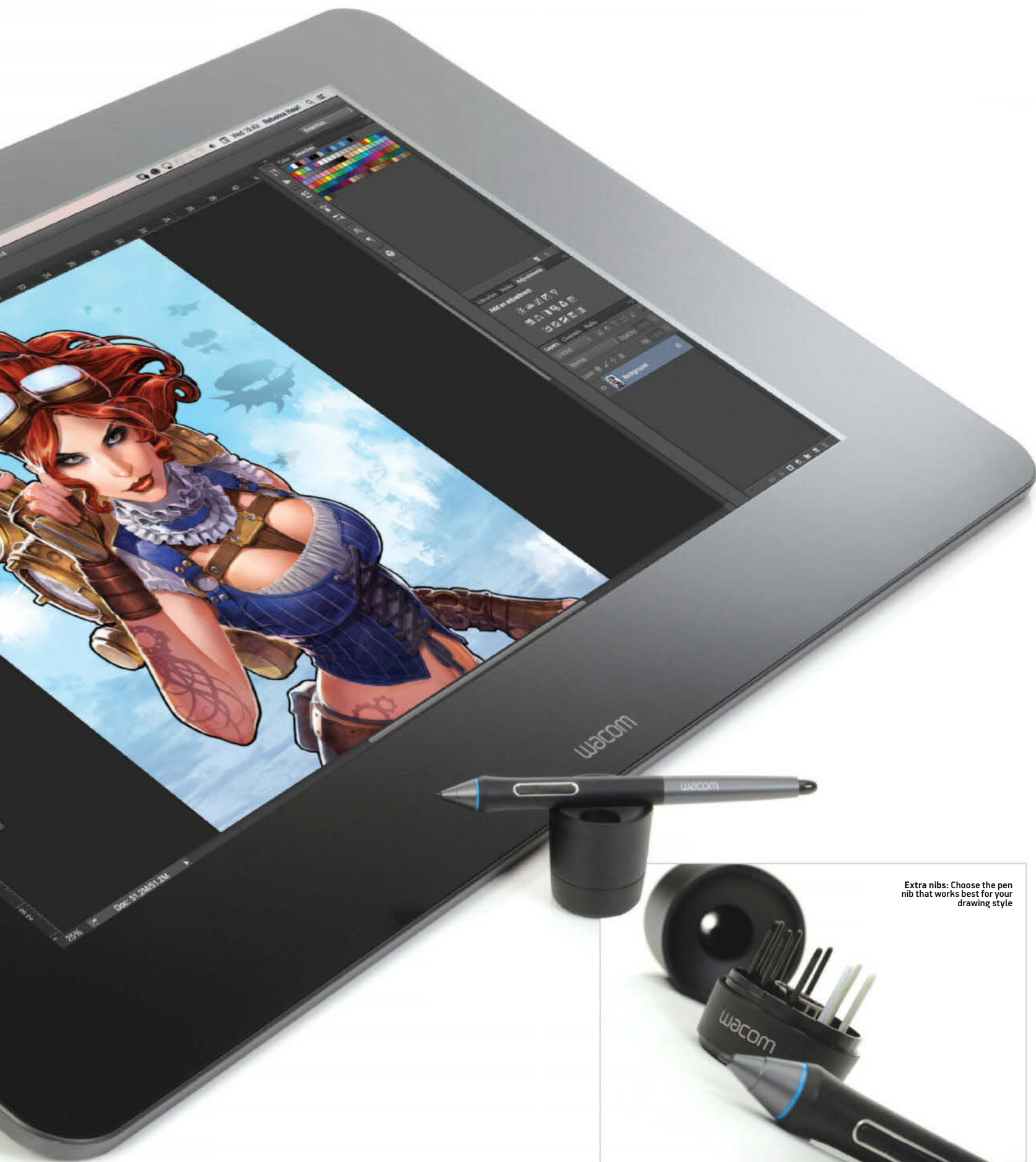
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When he was hired by PepsiCo to optimise the popular soft drink's recipe, Howard Moskowitz famously said "there is no perfect Pepsi, only perfect Pepsis". By this, he meant: you can't expect that one product will cater to every customer. Everyone has varying tastes; it all comes down to personal preference. It's no different with digital editing hardware: one artist will swear by the Wacom Intuos Manga, while other artists will balk at the very thought of using one. When an artist argues why their chosen tablet is their favourite, they might say the pen pressure is just right, or that they need the convenient ExpressKeys, or they appreciate the tablet's portability, and so on. They might even argue that they're so comfortable with their tablet that they don't see the point of getting a Cintiq. And they're really missing out.

The proof is in the using; you won't realise how good a Cintiq is until you try it out for yourself. Tablet users might not admit it, but the truth is this: working with a tablet – looking up at a screen, not at your drawing hand – never feels completely natural. Cintiqs offer digital artists the closest thing to seamless drawing with digital media as is yet available. Once you get used to it, you forget you're drawing on a screen; the barrier between creation and the hardware you are using is no longer there. It's just you and your work.





Extra nibs: Choose the pen nib that works best for your drawing style



Every feature of the Cintiq 27QHD package is designed with functionality in mind. At 27 inches with a 16:9 aspect ratio, this model is an imposing size, which offers an impressively expansive workspace. Professionals who intend to put hours of work into this product will get the most use out of its truly elephantine proportions.

Despite its size, the Cintiq 27QHD is still a looker. Black, sleek, edgeless – it oozes style. The screen has a slightly etched glass surface, which produced a nice bite for the stylus, and reduces glare. It isn't the least bit fragile either: press as hard as you like with the pen, even lean on it while you're working.

Another considerable improvement offered by this increased size is the resolution. True to its QHD (Quad High Definition) name, the resolution comes in at 2560 x 1440, and is compatible with 4k, which looks beautiful with the use of HDMI.

“It does feel strange at first, but once you get into the flow of drawing, you'll wonder what confused you in the first place”

The Pro Pen, which boasts double the levels of pen pressure offered by the previous model – 2048 to be exact – will make a huge difference to your working process. Brush size and opacity control is the most responsive it's ever been. It comes with all the extra functions you'd expect: two function buttons, an eraser, tilt and flick sensitivity, as well as a pen stand containing extra nibs. It's light, the rubber grip is comfortable to hold, and feels much better than its predecessors. If you can't justify the purchase of a Cintiq, at least buy one of these separately; they're compatible with every tablet in the Intuos range.

■ A CLOSER LOOK AT THE WACOM PRO PEN



The pen is arguably the most important part of any graphics tablet package, and Wacom has not disappointed with the Pro Pen. Unlike the rubbery feel of the previous model, the Pro Pen has a comfortable, ergonomic grip that never puts strain on the hand. It also has two fully customisable side-switches that can be rebound to any tool or hotkey you choose.

Conveniently, the Pro Pen is cordless and battery-less, and works with any Wacom hardware in the Intuos and Cintiq range. There's a range of accessories available for the pen, including a wide variety of grips, and a handy carry case.

Most impressive of all its features is its functionality. Boasting 2048 levels of pressure

sensitivity on both the nib and eraser, as well as 60 levels of tilt recognition, the Pro Pen doubles the levels of sensitivity achievable by the previous model.

Upon comparing the old to the new, the Pro Pen displays a greater level of control even when the same levels of pressure are applied. Its range affects opacity, shape dynamics, flick and tilt operations, and to such great capacity that you won't need to adjust brush size quite so often.

Sold separately with the carry case, the Wacom Pro Pen is on sale for £72.

This is an excellent way to upgrade your current toolkit without having to pay out for an entirely new tablet. Once you've used the Pro Pen once, you won't want to go back.



Ports aplenty: There are four USB 3.0 ports, plus one additional USB for the ExpressKey Remote dongle, and an HDMI input



ExpressKey remote: The remote can be placed anywhere on the screen, or handheld for your comfort and comes with 17 keys



Quick setup: Unlike the Cintiq's older models, setup is now quick and painless: plug it in, install the software, calibrate your pen, and you're ready to go

The convenience and functionality of the express keys has been improved further with the inclusion of the ExpressKey Remote. The magnetic remote can be placed anywhere on the screen, or hand-held, for your personal comfort while working, and comes with 17 keys. Unfortunately, the Remote includes one of the 27's main caveats: the scroll wheel. It can be set to increase or decrease brush size, zoom in or out, and rotate the canvas. The wheel however, is so sensitive that you may find, when reaching for the Undo button, your canvas will suddenly go askew. However, all keys can be rebound to your preference; to avoid jostling the wheel, simply switch your most used functions

to keys lower down the remote.

The 27's brightness is spot-on out of the box, and Wacom guarantees that the colour calibration will be correct. If you wish to adjust it, all Cintiqs now come with Wacom Colour Manager powered by the trusted X-Rite.

This is Wacom's best-looking Cintiq model yet, and the anti-glare screen, improved resolution, and additional Cloud service make it its most intuitive. The only barrier you'll face when getting to grips with the Cintiq is adjusting to drawing on a screen. It does feel strange at first, but once you get into the flow of drawing, you'll wonder what confused you in the first place. By purchasing a Cintiq, you are essentially

buying back the time you would otherwise spend battling with a tablet, and erasing mistakes that were the fault of your pen's lack of pressure sensitivity. No professional artist should be without this fantastic tool.

VERDICT

Features: **10/10**

Ease of use: **10/10**

Quality of results: **10/10**

Value for money: **9/10**

FINAL SCORE: 10/10

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So many people turn to digital art because of the limitless possibilities for creation. You can erase anything and start again, layer your work and create your own brushes: you can take things so much further than just the page. Some might say art has never been so creative.

It's somewhat ironic then, that the ultimate goal for so many digital painters, no matter their software, is to find a tool that gives them perfect realism and replication of real life media. The perfect brush, the perfect tablet and textures that look just like canvas are in high demand on the internet. Digital artists love to get closer to the real thing, and with that in mind, Escape Motions' Rebelle package is a perfect toy to experiment with.

While some Photoshop brushes are more intuitive or realistic than others, Rebelle takes realism to a new realm. It's solely a painting program, with a set of brushes and nibs on the left-hand side for picking, and colours on the right. But where it really comes into its

own is with the sheer level of control and accuracy you have when you're painting.

It's not necessarily that Rebelle has a wealth of unique or revolutionary tools to bring you closer to the art of painting; it's more that the program uses simple ideas brilliantly. The Smudge tool is a fairly standard addition to any painting program, but in Rebelle, it feels so much more responsive to your touch. You can create swishes and flourishes, and even change the pattern that you smudge with: useful if you're imagining smudging pastels with the side of your hand, rather than acrylic with your finger. There's the ability to make your canvas wetter or drier; you can blow the canvas, and you can even lift it up and tilt for the paint to slide in a certain direction. All of this can be non-destructive with layers, and the effect of the paint is realistic to the point that even the paint drips look real.

That's without touching on the wealth of resources at your fingertips within the program. There are canvases

REAL PAINT EFFECTS

CREATE TRADITIONAL PAINT EFFECTS BY COMBINING REBELLE AND PHOTOSHOP



COLOUR SHIFTS

Watercolour settings allow you to achieve the look of softly blended colours, where two hues of diluted paint mix together on the surface of the paper.

BLENDING COLOURS

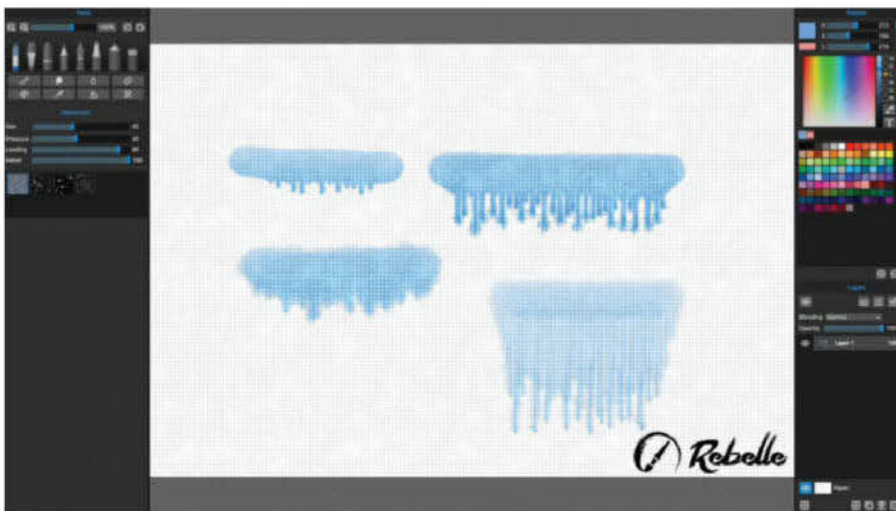
Rebelle imitates the subtractive mixing of colours that you see in real paint, which can dull down tones. Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment in Photoshop to bring back those glowing colours.

DRIPPING PAINT

There are settings in Rebelle to mimic the look of heavily diluted watercolour dripping down paper – you can even lift up the paper and angle it so your drips go where you want them to.

BETTER THAN THE REAL THING

Rebelle enables you to combine the unique looks of acrylic and watercolour paints, which would be physically impossible in real life!



for you to paint onto as well as a selection of great brushes, and though Rebelle isn't the most versatile program out there, the features it does boast are top quality. Rebelle might be a program you use to paint in, or just experiment; it's a powerful tool either way, and one that lets you get closer to real life. Combined with the editing and adjustment abilities of Photoshop, it will take you even closer to the holy grail of digital art, creating a look that's virtually indistinguishable from the real thing.

VERDICT

Features: **8/10**
Ease of use: **9/10**
Quality of results: **8/10**
Value for money: **7/10**

FINAL SCORE: 8/10

A simple tool that's fun for beginners and experts alike, Rebelle will show you why you fell in love with painting

“It's not that Rebelle has unique tools to bring you closer to painting; it's more that the program uses simple ideas brilliantly”



TOP 5

DIGITAL PRODUCTS TO GET YOU CLOSER TO REAL MEDIA

1. WACOM CINTIQ
www.wacom.com
From £650

The Wacom Cintiq is not only one of the finest graphics tablets on the market; with the huge screen and 4K graphics, it's possibly the closest you'll ever get to the feeling of natural drawing.

2. SENSU BRUSH
www.sensubrush.com
\$40

Sensu brushes are simple styluses designed to look and feel like paintbrushes when you're digitally painting. They're capable of producing realistic paint strokes on touchscreens, and they look great too.

3. WACOM PRO PEN
www.wacom.com
£72

The Wacom Pro Pen has the weight of an actual pen; it's sensitive enough to glide across your tablet with no resistance whatsoever and is the perfect companion to the Cintiq.

4. ADOBE BRUSH
www.adobe.com
Free with CC

The Adobe Brush app is just one of many that gives you even more control over resources in Photoshop. Take a photo of anything on your phone – such as sketches or strokes you've made – and the app will convert it to a brush.

5. PATTERN MAKER
www.adobe.com
Free

Download the Pattern Maker filter from the Adobe website and create your own textures for free. It's great for creating the perfect paper or canvas background to paint on.

YOUNG GUN

AT JUST 18 YEARS OLD LUKE BAILEY IS ALREADY RUNNING HIS OWN DIGITAL ART BUSINESS ONLINE, BUT HE'S HUNGRY – AND WISE – ENOUGH TO WANT TO LEARN MORE

Award-winning professional digital artist Luke Bailey has been interested and passionate about art since a very young age. A few years ago he began seriously pursuing digital art and quickly found that it was a genre that he loved. The services he offers range from book cover design to logos and custom art.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?

I would describe my style as being very dreamlike and surreal. In most pieces, I like to add exaggerated lighting effects to really give a fantasy feel to my creations.

HOW AND WHEN DID YOU FIRST START USING PHOTOSHOP?

It all started when I was just 14, when my friend Bartosz Wozniak (only 16 at the time), was interested in photography and he introduced me to Photoshop. He began teaching me just the basics that he knew. After weeks of learning new things about the software, I began picking up valuable techniques and skills through tutorials. It was quite early on that I started to take interest in fantasy and surreal artwork. I went to college, studying Art and Design, however after completing the course I took one year off to



OUR READER
LUKE BAILEY

www.luke-bailey.co.uk

“I feel that my biggest strength as an artist is that I pay really close attention to small details in my work, which makes my artwork more interesting and helps the viewers think more about the overall piece”

Surreal: Bailey found working on this image a fresh challenge. He says: “I have seen many amazing creations using trees so I wanted to give it a go myself”

All article images © Luke Bailey



The Fault In Our Stars: "I wanted to portray thoughts within a creative person," says Bailey. "Her eyes are covered, which gives me the feeling she's thinking and her mind is within her dreams. I used a lot of techniques such as colour overlays to make the image stand out more. [I] also added lighting with a soft brush to give it a more fantasy feel"



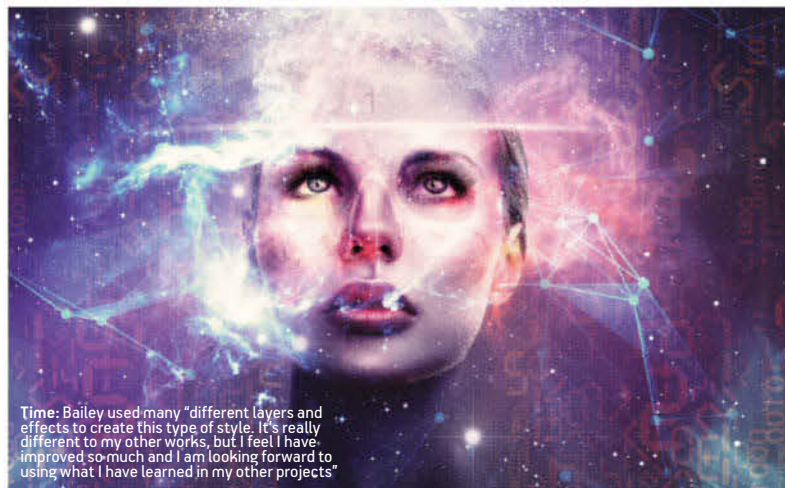
LUKE BAILEY -DREAMS-

“I feel that the most appealing aspect of photomanipulation is the ability to create something realistic or, if you like, something completely surreal, simply from imagination”

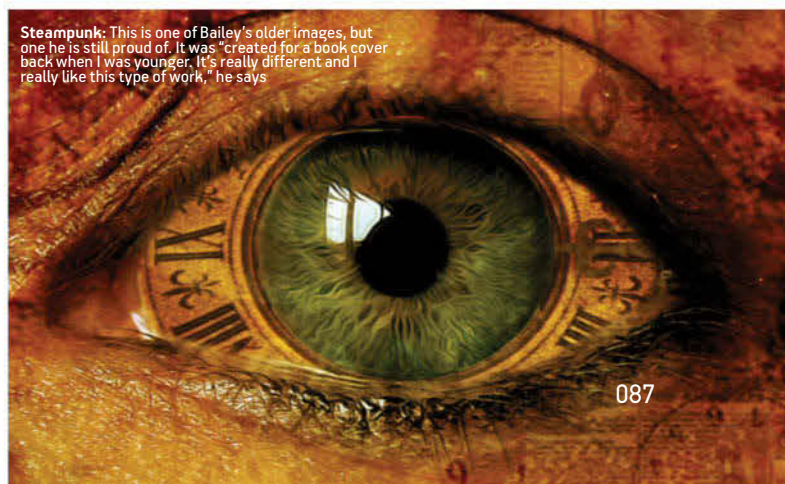
Dreams



Star Fire



Time: Bailey used many "different layers and effects to create this type of style. It's really different to my other works, but I feel I have improved so much and I am looking forward to using what I have learned in my other projects"



Steampunk: This is one of Bailey's older images, but one he is still proud of. It was "created for a book cover back when I was younger. It's really different and I really like this type of work," he says



Nightmares: This scary piece turned out better than Bailey expected, because, he says, "I usually struggle with using human stocks with blending to make the piece look realistic"

FOCUS ON THE DETAILS

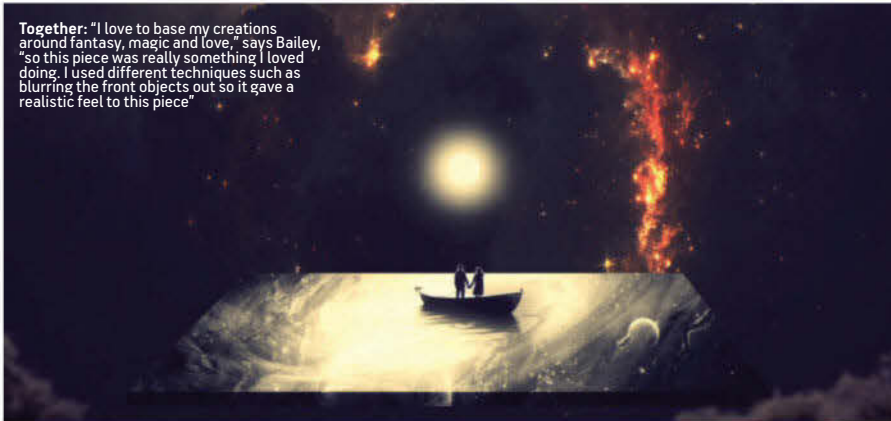
Luke Bailey's work looks to the stars, as he likes to make work that is surreal, dreamlike and generally awe-inspiring. His favourite of his own pieces is *Time*, because he put "a lot of detail in this piece and really pushed my limits in creating something better than all my other pieces. I feel I am progressing each day and learning new things. What I find helpful and motivating is how many other artists can help you out, by showing their own styles and how they create their artwork," he adds.

To that end, Bailey's advice for other young artists would be "Add colour overlays to blend and make your work stand out," and "focus on small details to really make your work interesting and special."



Hope

Together: "I love to base my creations around fantasy, magic and love," says Bailey, "so this piece was really something I loved doing. I used different techniques such as blurring the front objects out so it gave a realistic feel to this piece"



“I feel that the most appealing aspect of photomanipulation is the ability to create something realistic or, if you like, something completely surreal, simply from imagination”



Adventure

pursue my digital art. I set up my own, small business, offering my services such as book cover designs, logos and custom art through my website, Facebook and other social media platforms. This September I am hoping to get back to college to study graphic design, on a two year course. I have a few options open for me at the moment.

HOW DO YOU HOPE YOUR CAREER WILL GO FROM HERE?

I hope that in the future, I will be able to work for myself and run a successful business. This is really my dream! Being able to do something I love whilst making a living from it.

My second option would probably be to work for a big company as a designer. My latest achievement – which I'm really proud of – is my new website design, which you can see at www.luke-bailey.co.uk. I feel that, this is a big step forward in my digital art career. All these things

have made me who I am today and I could not be happier with how things are going.

DO YOU SHOOT YOUR OWN IMAGES, OR USE STOCK IMAGES?

It is both really, which I think is the case with most high-level digital artists. It depends on what I am creating to be honest.

For a simple texture, I prefer to photograph it myself, but usually I use either DeviantArt for stocks or purchase them from Shutterstock.

I feel that my biggest strength as an artist is that I pay really close attention to small details in my work, which makes my artwork more interesting and helps the viewers think more about the overall piece. I would really like to improve on blending images together so it looks almost as if it's really there and not a cut-out.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PHOTOSHOP TOOL?

I tend to use them all! If I really had to pick my most used one, it would be the Curves tool or maybe Add Noise. It really depends what style I am going for, but these two features can give my artwork a subtle look, which I really appreciate, as well as an old, vintage kind of feel.

WHO OR WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

Everywhere around me! My daily lifestyle inspires me, whether it is something from a movie or maybe seeing something in real life – anything can trigger my mind off to start creating. I also look at other artists in **Advanced Photoshop**, who are incredibly talented!

I feel that the most appealing aspect of photomanipulation is the ability to create something realistic or, if you like, something completely surreal, simply from imagination. I really think it is exciting, because you can create absolutely anything you want and the feeling you experience, when you sit back and look at your artwork and say "Yes! I did that!" is incredible.

A black lens hood and a black tripod are shown on a stone surface. The lens hood is a simple black ring. The tripod is a black, extendable metal stand. In the background, there are various types of rocks and a patch of green moss.

GATHER THE PROJECT MATERIALS

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES FOR ROCK AND MOSS TEXTURES

Lens hood: A lens hood is very important for this project so the light is even and there is no glare in your shots

Tripod: You are going to need a tripod to make sure that your images are as sharp and in focus as possible

Rocks: You will need a variety of rock types to photograph: smooth, rough, and so on – it's helpful if they are easily movable too

Moss: The best place to find moss is a garden supply store, it usually has a greenhouse as well that acts as a softbox



CREATE ROCK AND MOSS TEXTURES

MAKE NATURAL TEXTURES USING RAW MATERIALS FOUND IN YOUR GARDEN

Photographing moss and rocks is different than photographing other textures. Vintage textures, coffee stains, sketchy textures and paint splatter textures can all be scanned into your computer. Rocks, moss, and other natural elements have a more three-dimensional texture,

which can't be scanned. After all, you can't just go throwing rocks on a scanner, we've tried. It doesn't end well.

This tutorial will show you how to get out of the studio and shoot natural, outdoor textures. The steps are basic, but if you follow the simple formula, you

will soon be an expert at obtaining your own rock and moss textures. In addition, many of these steps can be applied to much more than rocks and moss. For this tutorial, the focus will be rocks due to their variations and ease of access, but the same rules and steps apply to moss and other natural textures.

LEARN HOW TO CAPTURE ROCKY TEXTURES

CHOOSE THE PERFECT ROCK AND DISCOVER HOW TO SET YOUR CAMERA FOR THE BEST TEXTURES



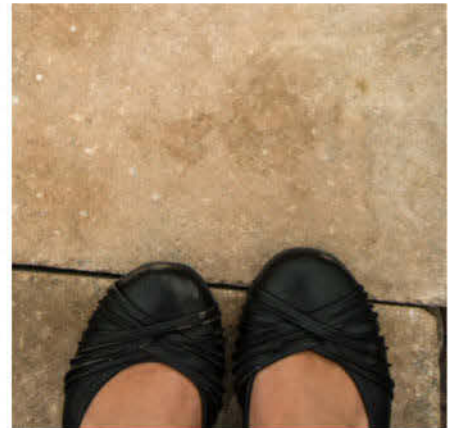
01 PICK A ROCK

There are many types of rock found in different locations; each provides a different texture when photographed. Think about the applications ahead of time so you photograph the type of rock you need for the project.



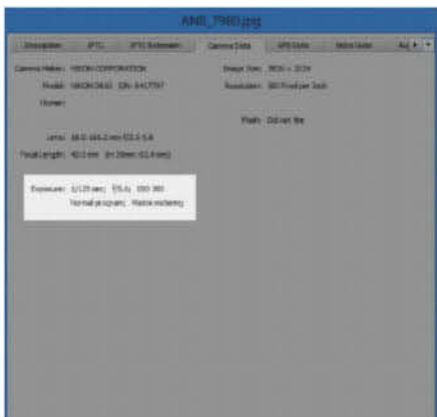
02 CLEAN IT UP

Using a hand pump, brush or canned air sprayer, clean the dirt from the rock so the only visible texture is the rock itself. You can also wet the rock to further saturate the rock's natural colours.



03 POSITION YOURSELF

Pose both yourself and the rock so that the camera is at a 90-degree angle to the surface of the rock. This will lessen the amount of lens correction you will have to do later.



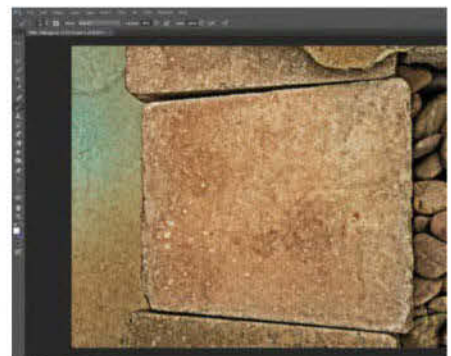
04 ADJUST YOUR SETTINGS

For most textures you will want to keep the ISO as low as possible. Keep the aperture over f4.5, and the shutter speed over 1/100 sec. This keeps both noise and blurriness to a minimum.



05 SHOOT YOUR IMAGES

Photograph your subject. Make sure you take multiple photos, and check to ensure they are clear and exposed properly. If photographing a group of things try to go as wide as possible without getting distortion.



06 OPEN IN PHOTOSHOP

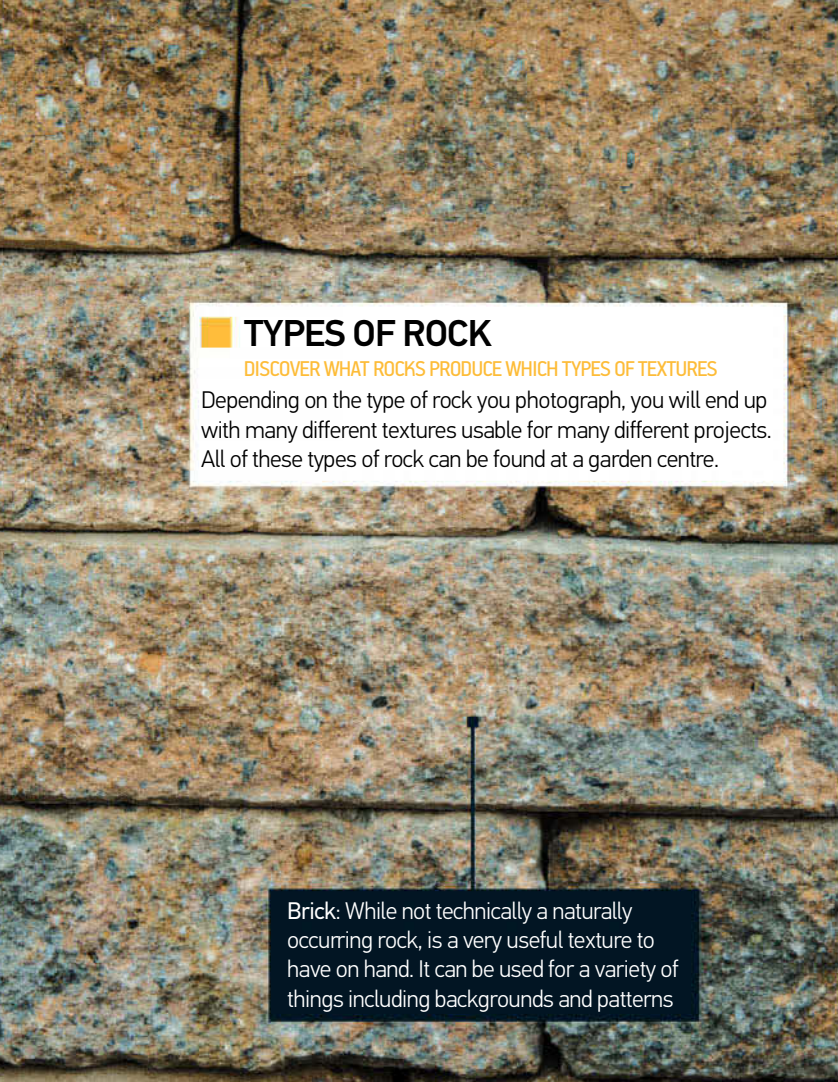
Open your image in Photoshop. Duplicate the background layer, then go to Image>Adjustments>Shadows/Highlights. Move the shadows, highlights, and midtones sliders to maximum then desaturate the layer and set it to Overlay mode.




TYPES OF ROCK

DISCOVER WHAT ROCKS PRODUCE WHICH TYPES OF TEXTURES

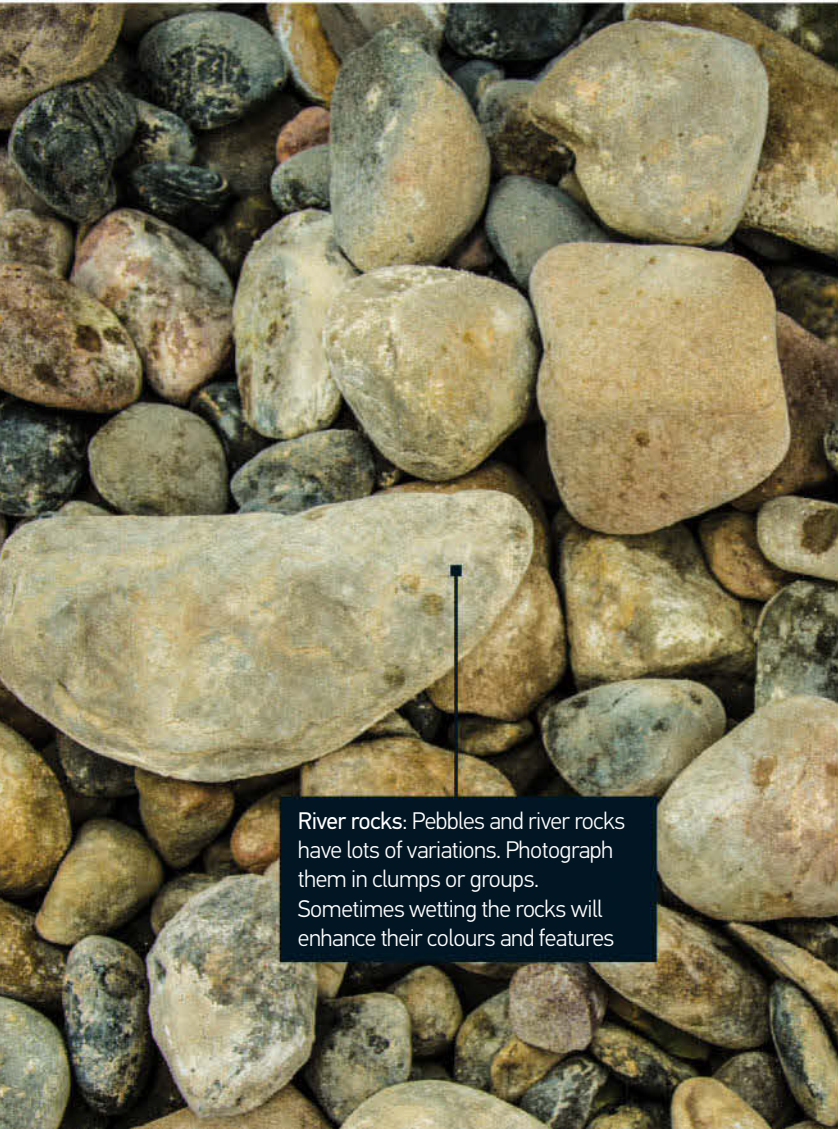
Depending on the type of rock you photograph, you will end up with many different textures usable for many different projects. All of these types of rock can be found at a garden centre.




Brick: While not technically a naturally occurring rock, is a very useful texture to have on hand. It can be used for a variety of things including backgrounds and patterns



Slate: Flat, slate rock is pretty standard and easy to find. It has layers of texture that photographs nicely and can be used for a basic, gritty texture



River rocks: Pebbles and river rocks have lots of variations. Photograph them in clumps or groups. Sometimes wetting the rocks will enhance their colours and features



Garden rocks: The best rocks for overall, even texture are just large, gritty, garden rocks. The texture is even throughout the surface so it photographs well. They're also very easy to find

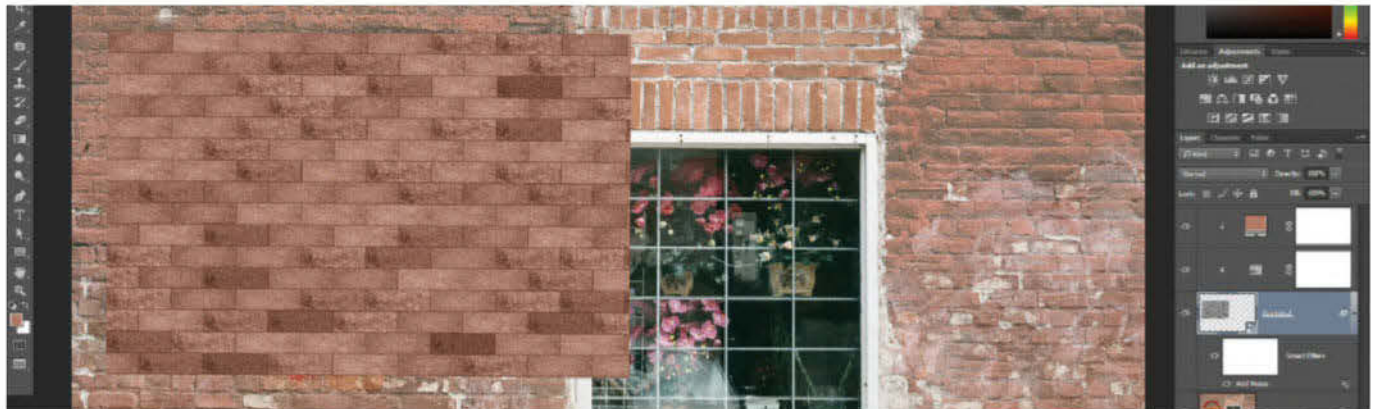
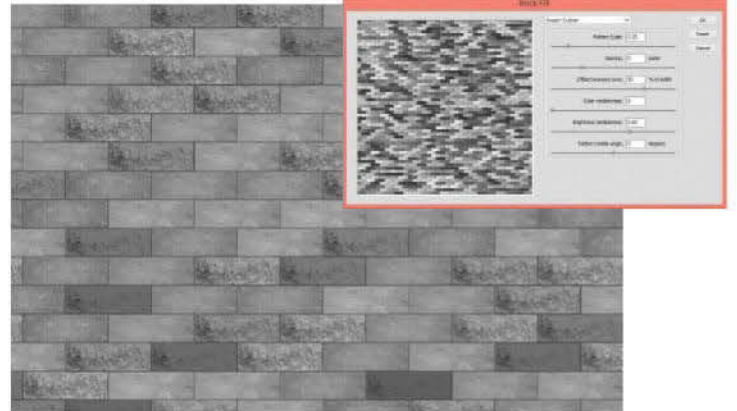
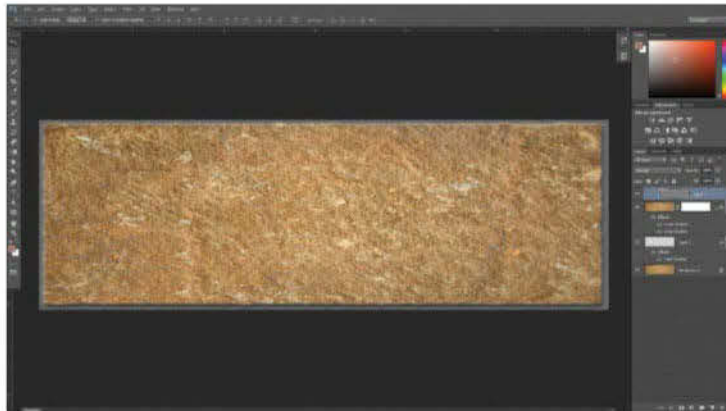
BRICK BY BRICK

CREATE YOUR OWN BRICK WALL TEXTURE

Crafting repetitive textures from photos is usually a simple case of using the Offset filter and some careful cloning to cover up the seams. But some textures pose more of a challenge than others. Something like a brick wall with the staggered placement of bricks can be somewhat confounding!

Yet Photoshop's rarely used Scripted Pattern Fills makes it quite achievable. The first step is to craft a number of single brick images from the stone textures. Be sure to include an outer border for the grout, and desaturate the image so it's easier to add colour later on. Then define the brick image as a pattern. Use the Edit>Fill

command set to the brick pattern and enable the Script option to use the Brick Fill feature. There are several options then available to help create a very convincing brick wall effect. Be sure to watch the video tutorial included on the FileSilo to see how we use this technique to create a custom brick wall texture to cover up graffiti in an image.



Before



After

HOW TO DO ROCK RUBBING

OBTAIN ROCK TEXTURE THROUGH RUBBINGS



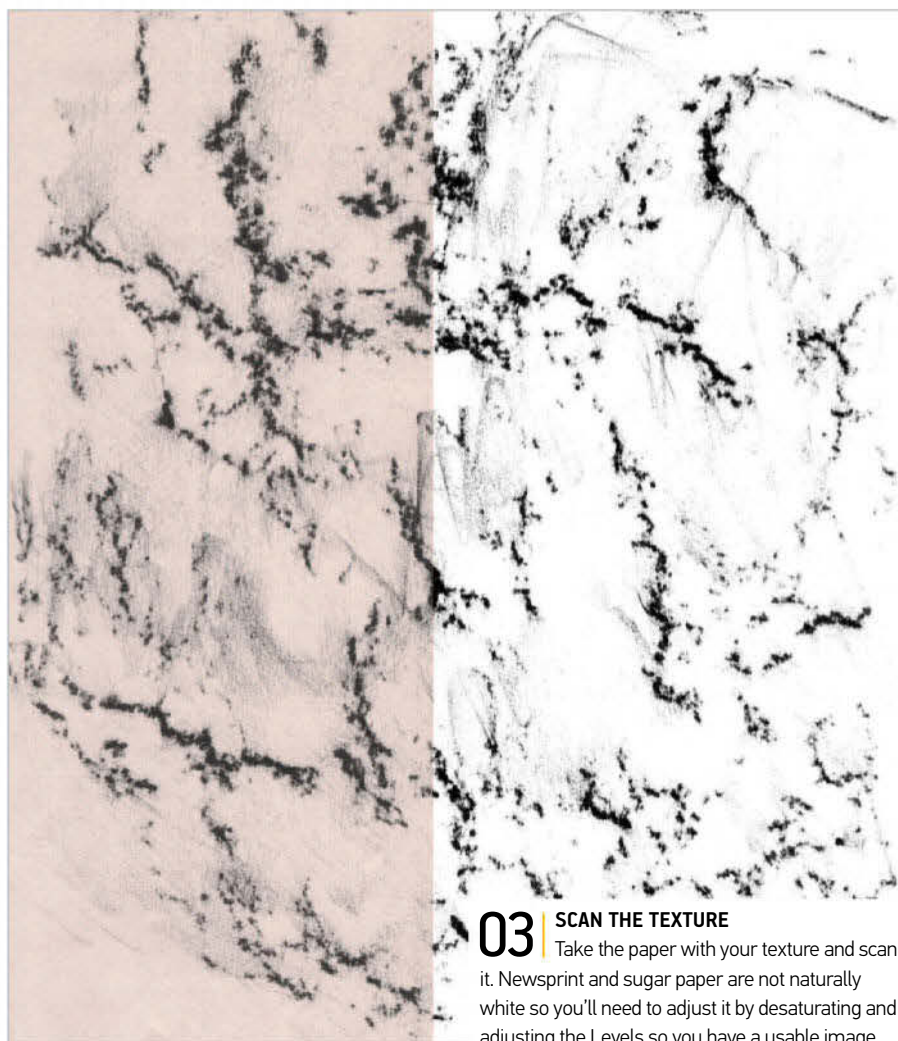
01 COLLECT MATERIALS

For this project you will need a couple of easy to find materials: a black crayon, some unbleached newsprint or sugar paper, and a variety of textured rocks. Flatter rocks are easy to get texture from.



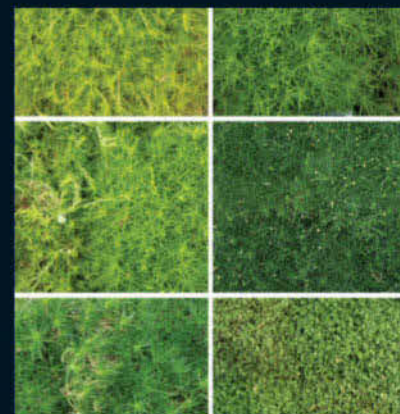
02 RUB IT

Place the newsprint over the rock. Hold it in place while you rub with the side of the crayon to transfer the texture onto the paper. Use the flat side of the crayon for maximum coverage.



03 SCAN THE TEXTURE

Take the paper with your texture and scan it. Newsprint and sugar paper are not naturally white so you'll need to adjust it by desaturating and adjusting the Levels so you have a usable image.



MOSS TEXTURES

MOSS TEXTURES OF A VARIETY OF MOSSES

Here's six soft, green, spongy moss textures free for you to use in your own personal work. Perfect for adding a touch of overgrown flavour to your digital scenes.



ROCK RESOURCES

11 ROCK IMAGES

This collection of evenly lit rock textures are a welcome addition to any digital artist looking to round out their collection of natural textures.



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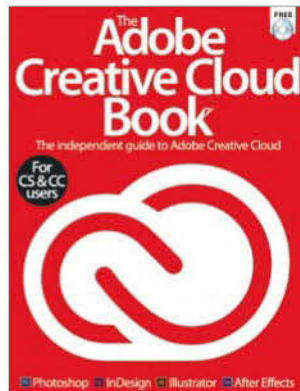
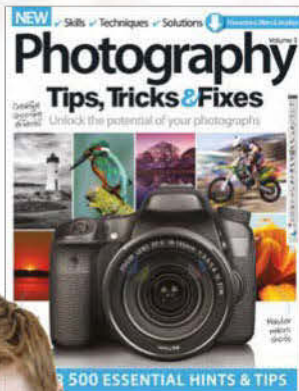
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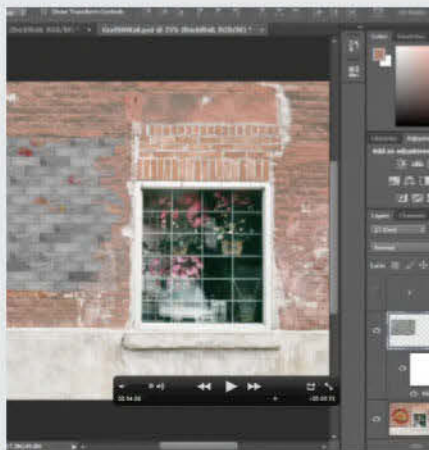


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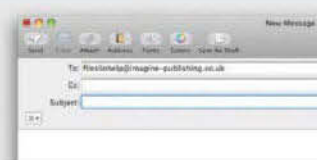


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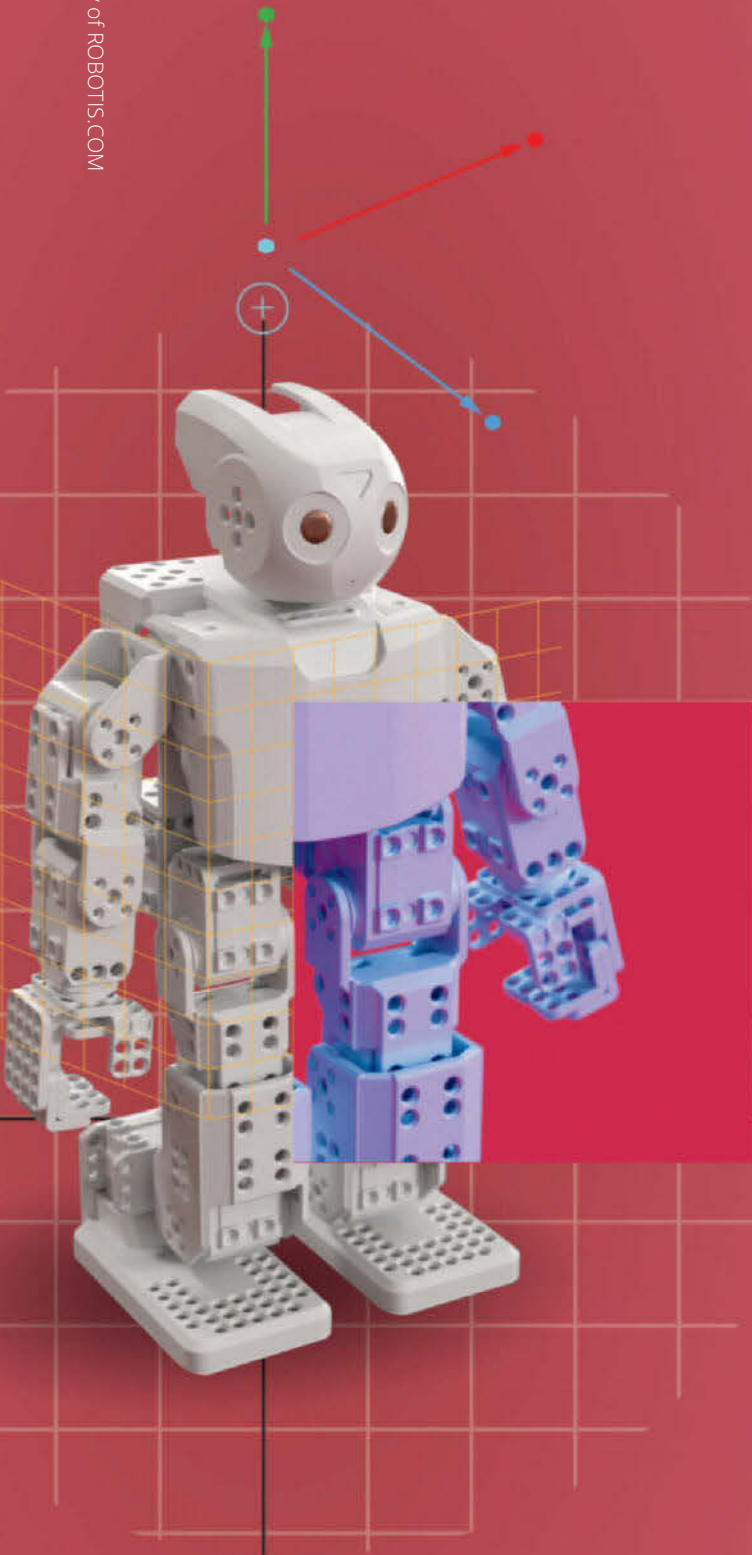
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Having trouble with any of the techniques in this issue's tutorials? Don't know how to make the best use of your free resources? Want to have your work critiqued by those in the know? Then why not visit the **Advanced Photoshop** Facebook page for all your questions, concerns and qualms. There is a friendly community of fellow Photoshop users to help you out, as well as regular posts and updates from the magazine team. Like us today and start chatting!



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